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Tory risks election by defending tax support for faith-base schools in Ontario

Harry der Nederlanden

The issue of tax support for "religious schools" has become a hot-button issue in Ontario's provincial elections. As soon as Progressive Conservative leader John Tory announced it as part of his party's election platform, the Liberals went on the attack like flies to an open wound. They detected a vulnerable spot and believe they can trip up the P.C.'s on the issue.

But the sparring and rhetoric was not confined to the politicians, nearly every columnist and journalist in the province waded in to share his or her bit of wisdom. And the "Letter" pages in various newspapers show that the issue has triggered very strong feelings, especially among opponents – the defenders of a single secularist school system for all.

Some of the latter become almost hysterical at the idea of funding diverse "religious schools" and predict the imminent collapse of the public school system, the spread of religious intolerance, the subversion of Canadian values and the balkanization of Canada's multicultural society. In the process, they so misrepresent these schools that they themselves become guilty of spreading religious intolerance. Many of the noisiest critics seem to be wholly unaware that tax support for "religious schools" has been implemented elsewhere in the country without widespread social dislocation and an exodus from the public school system.

There are only about 100 faith-based private school in Ontario with an enrolment of about 53,000 students, constituting about two percent of the student population. The cost of full funding, according to Tory's estimates, would be about



\$400 million per year. While this sounds like a considerable sum, it's a small blip in the grand total. It amounts to about one-tenth of the increase in funding promised

to the public schools over the next two years. Yet, the Liberals, public school teachers and ardent defenders wail that this modest sum will do irreparable harm to

public schooling in Ontario. Greg Sorbara, the head of the Liberal Party's election campaign said Tory's proposal "is the greatest threat to public education I've ever seen." It would "hollow out" public schools, he said, and threaten the very foundation of public education.

The issue has come to predominate the election campaign. It is a very divisive issue and it looks as if the P.C.s didn't anticipate the fallout it would cause. Several commentators declared that the proposal is so unpopular that

it will cost Tory the election. Especially after Tory stated that, yes, creationism would be allowed to be taught in faith-based schools, some spoke of Tory's "self-immolation". Colby Cosh of the *National Post* informed his readers that creationism was actually an American invention.

Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto, quoted in the *Globe and Mail*, said: "I think this will prove to be a major thorn for the Conservative campaign this election. Without this, they would have been much,

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After 30 years, a nuclear comeback?

Harry der Nederlanden

Nuclear energy is making a comeback, according to *The Economist*. In the 1970s and 80s it fell into disrepute and out of public favor. First there was the near meltdown of one of the reactors on Three-Mile Island in the U.S. and then the catastrophe of Chernobyl in the Ukraine that resulted in the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people. Although the Chernobyl reactor was very different from anything operating in the west, it exacerbated existing fears about nuclear energy. However, even before this environmentalists campaigned hard to make the public aware of the dangers of the waste products produced by nuclear fission. The waste will remain dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years.

In the U.S. construction of nuclear plants was subject to so much red tape and subject to strong resistance not just by environmentalists but also by



Pickering power plant

the communities where they were being built that delays often mounted to several years. As a result, construction costs escalated beyond the moon. And constructions costs of nuclear plants already constituted three-quarters of the costs of nuclear power. A number of power comp-

anies went under as a result. Some plants were built at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars that were never put into operation. Many of the plants that did make it into operation and which had been expected to run almost continuously were a disappointment in terms of efficiency as they had to be shut

down 50 percent of the time for upkeep and repairs.

However, nuclear power has obvious attractions. While the world's largest oil and gas deposits are located in hostile or potentially unstable environments, uranium mines are located primarily in Canada and Australia.

Moreover, if gas and coal-powered plants are made to pay for the environmental damage that issues from their smokestacks, nuclear power will look even more attractive. Although it produces little or no greenhouse gasses, the nuclear industry has always had to factor in the cost of disposing of their radioactive wastes. Till now most of the waste from gas and coal plants have simply been dispersed into the environment. But the energy sector knows that it's only a matter of time before carbon caps will be imposed.

New technology

Still, it's an uphill battle for the
See **Nuclear power** on page 19

News

China emerges as leader in cyberwarfare

In recent weeks, China has been accused of hacking the Pentagon as well as British and German government offices.

Robert Marquand and Ben Arnoldy

Paris and Oakland, Calif. — When suspected Chinese hackers penetrated the Pentagon this summer, reports downplayed the cyberattack. The hackers hit a secure Pentagon system known as NIPRNet — but it only carries unclassified information and general e-mail, Department of Defense officials said.

Yet a central aim of the Chinese hackers may not have been top secrets, but a probe of the Pentagon network structure itself, some analysts argue. The NIPRNet (Non-classified Internet Protocol Router Network) is crucial in the quick deployment of US forces should China attack Taiwan. By crippling a Pentagon Net used to call US forces, China gains crucial hours and minutes in a lightning attack designed to force a Taiwan surrender, experts say.

China's presumed infiltration underscores an ever bolder and more advanced capability by its cybershock troops. Today, of an estimated 120 countries working on cyberwarfare, China, seeking great power status, has emerged as a leader.

"The Chinese are the first to use cyberattacks for political and military goals," says James Mulvenon, an expert on China's military and director of the Center for Intelligence and Research in Washington. "Whether it is battlefield preparation or hacking networks connected to the German chancellor, they are the first state actor to jump feet first into 21st-century cyberwarfare technology. This is clearly becoming a more serious and open problem."

China is hardly the only state conducting cyberespionage. "Everybody is hacking everybody," says Johannes Ullrich, an expert with the SANS Technology Institute, pointing to Israeli hacks against the US, and French hacks against European Union partners. But aspects of the Chinese approach worry him. "The part I am most afraid of is ... staging probes inside key industries. It's almost like sleeper cells, having ways to [disrupt] systems when you need to if it ever came to war."

In recent weeks, China stands accused not only of the Pentagon attack, but also of daily striking German federal ministries and British government offices, including Parliament. After an investigation in May, officials at Germany's Office of the Protection of the Constitution told *Der Spiegel* that 60 percent of all cyberattacks on German systems come from China. Most originate in the cities of Lanzhou and Beijing, and in Guangdong Province, centers of high-tech military operations.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel publicly raised the issue with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in Beijing last month. Mr. Wen did not deny China's activity, but said it should stop. President George Bush, prior to his meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao in Sydney, Australia, at the APEC summit last week, stated that respect of

computer "systems" is "what we expect from people with whom we trade."

The accusations, hard to prove conclusively, still illumine an emerging theater of low-level attacks among nations. This spring, presumed Russian hackers made headlines with a one-off cyberblitz of Estonia, shutting down one of the most wired countries in Europe for a week — blunt payback for removal of a Soviet war memorial. *

China's "gray hat" hackers

But China's cyberstrategy is deemed murkier and more widespread. The tenaciousness of Chinese hackers, whose skills were once derided by US cyberexperts, has begun to sink in to Western states and their intelligence services.

Probes of the Pentagon system that would bring US intervention should China attack Taiwan are part of a program dating to the 1990s that links cyberwarfare to real-world military action by China's People's Liberation Army. The very probe shows success in China's long-term program, experts say.

"The Chinese want to disrupt that unofficial network in a crucial time-frame inside a Taiwan scenario," says Mr. Mulvenon. "It is something they've written about. When you read what Chinese strategists say, it is the unclassified network they will go after ... to delay deployment. China is developing tremendous capability."

Much of the hacking prowess in China is attributed to "gray hat" hackers — techie mercenaries, often younger males, geeks proud of the title — who can be mobilized to attack systems if needed, experts say.

In cyberparlance, black hats are hackers whose professional life is spent trying to attack other systems. White hats are those who defend against attacks. But China is regarded as having a substantial number of hackers in the gray middle — cutting-edge technopatriots loosely affiliated with the Chinese government, but who are not formal agents of the state.

This allows many Chinese hackers to exist in a zone of deniability. To be sure, provability and deniability are central in cyberwarfare. The most difficult problem is how to prove who hacks a system.

In recent weeks, Beijing has officially expressed shock, pain, and denial of news reports like those in *Der Spiegel* fingering China, and at a host of official and semi-official accusations. But China's ardent denials, in the face of its own professed desire to be a cyberattack specialist, are not entirely persuasive, analysts say.

"Sometimes [Chinese] will brag about their exploits, and other times they'll disclaim them entirely, blaming unknown rogue individuals," says Bill Woodcock, research director at Packet Clearing House, a nonprofit research institute that focuses on Internet security and stability.

The new focus by other governments

on China's capabilities are part of getting to know a country long criticized for a lack of transparency. "China's ambitions are quite extensive. It is a great power that is rising, and so other people want to scrutinize you. That's part of being a great society," says a veteran European China-watcher in Beijing. "When you hack into the private files of other governments, people want to know what you are doing. If you talk about a harmonious world, and a harmonious society, and then you do things that aren't harmonious — you get called out."

Of particular alarm for Washington and other world capitals are so-called "zero-day attacks" — cyberpenetrations that look for software flaws to exploit. This is not an uncommon pastime for hackers. But in China's case, suspicion falls on professional hackers, says Sami Saydjari, a Defense Department computer-security veteran who now heads a firm called Cyber Defense Agency in Wisconsin.

"The Chinese ... [put] very strong controls over ... their Internet, and it's highly unlikely there are hacker groups that have any substantial level of capability they don't control," says Mr. Saydjari.

Analysts say China constantly probes US military networks. But attributing this conclusively to the People's Liberation Army, fingered by German officials in *Der Spiegel*, is almost impossible.

Tracing attacks

To trace attacks to their source requires the help of those who control each link, or router.

Proving cyberattacks involves what Mulvenon calls the "Tarzana, California, problem." How does one know an attack "isn't coming from a kid in Tarzana who is bouncing off a Chinese server?" Mulvenon asks. "You don't. You can't predicate a response based on perfect knowledge of the attacker. But we think that correlation is causation. That is, 'Who benefits?' The best-case analysis is to correlate attacks with what Chinese have always said and written their goals are, which makes them by far the most likely suspect."

Cyberpenetration runs the gamut, from simple to sophisticated. There's a simple "Trojan horse attack," for example, said to be used against the German chancellery. Hackers send what appears to be a legitimate e-mail. When opened, it installs malicious software that allows hackers to open files in a private network, or disrupt it. A Trojan horse is not surprising in an unclassified system, says Saydjari. "But some of the attacks attributed to China have been quite sophisticated."

Beijing's control showed in September



2003, when the company that administers .com and .net domain names made unilateral changes to the Internet's functioning. System administrators around the world scrambled to make piecemeal fixes.

"The domain-name system was broken for more than two weeks for the rest of the world, but after a brief interruption, it got mysteriously ... unbroken inside China after eight days," says Mr. Woodcock.

PLA doctrine explicitly states that information-technology disruption is part of "asymmetric" warfare. The US is more vulnerable than China to a cyberattack, says Saydjari, because of its greater reliance on high-tech, networked systems.

The PLA's "People's War" doctrine argues that all able-minded People's Republic computer users have a responsibility to fight for China with their laptops, says Woodcock. He argues that Beijing might call on ethnic Chinese hackers in any part of the world, hoping they might help. Even nonhackers might be asked to participate in "denial of service" (DoS) attacks — a weapon to shut down enemy websites that requires massive numbers of computers to accomplish. "The power of numbers is on their side," Woodcock says. China has the largest DoS capability in the world, he says, a concern to private-sector companies as well.

So far, China doesn't seem to be organizing DoS attacks, says Mr. Ullrich. During the EP-3 spy plane spat between the US and China in early 2001, some Chinese youths launched DoS attacks. But the government curtailed the attacks.

For several years, China has focused most of its military research and production on a high-tech air and missile-attack force — to overwhelm Taiwan. Hence, China's probe of the Pentagon NIPRNet. "They want to be able to attack the Net. They don't need a supersexy penetration program," Mulvenon argues. "They just bomb the Net itself. They disrupt the deployment of our military, simultaneously saturate Taiwan, delay the US arrival, and Taiwan capitulates. It's what they talk about."

Robert Marquand and Ben Arnoldy are staff writers of The Christian Science Monitor

News/Politics

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much better positioned."

Even some Tory supporters are shaking their heads, according to Margaret Wente of the *Globe and Mail*.

Others see the funding proposal as an election ploy to court the large ethnic vote in the greater Toronto area away from the Liberal Party – or at least get them to the polls. That seems a tad cynical. Former Ontario Premier Bill Davis and Tory have been working on this proposal for several years.

Tory acknowledged that he knew the policy would be controversial, but he introduced it because, with full funding for Catholic schools in the province, it is a matter of fairness. "I put my head down on my pillow every single night," he said, "and go to sleep comfortably knowing that I've been straight forward and honest with the people. It doesn't mean it's absolutely right or perfect, but it's an honest suggestion, as contrasted with my chief competitor, who has suggested that somehow what I'm really promoting is segregation."

National Post's David Asper, along with several other journalists, pointed out that McGuinty's warning that encouraging faith schools would undermine Canadian multiculturalism is hypocritical. He himself is a product of the Catholic school system (like many other Canadian leaders) and his wife teaches in a catholic school. Asper not only condemns "the blatant dishonesty and overblown Liberal rhetoric," he goes on to say: "Real leadership means saying what you mean and believing it. Many will disagree with Mr. Tory's position on public funding for qualifying religious schools, as he was surely aware when he first declared his position. He knew it would be controversial, but is prepared to stand by his view and provide a cogent rationale for it. This is a good example of leadership."

An editorial in the *Globe and Mail* agreed that it would be fairer for Ontario to embrace the "religious schools" and put them on the same footing as the Catholic schools. But "the best course of action would be to simply eliminate public funding for Ontario catholic schools," it argued. It called such funding "an anachronism in today's multi-faith province," a holdover from the days when Catholics were a threatened minority. Apparently, today minorities don't need protection.

The *Globe* editorial goes on to celebrate the public schools as the place where children from various minorities learn to mingle and assimilate instead of "encouraging kids to interact only with members of their own faith." Apparently Robert Putnam's study showing that situations that force diverse groups into closer proximity doesn't increase tolerance and trust but the very opposite hasn't penetrated very far (See Marian van Til's column last issue). It suggests that people need to have a home community in which to develop trust and from there it is actually easier to extend it to others.

Ontario votes

On October 10 citizens of Ontario will be going to the polls. The coming vote is significant for three reasons. First, this is the first time we will be voting since the adoption of fixed election dates. Up until now the provincial government has always timed elections to suit its own purposes and to enhance its own political fortunes. A weak government tends to drag out its mandate to the last possible moment, while a strong government is tempted to request an early dissolution of the legislature to secure a fresh mandate from the electorate. This has put considerable power in the hands of the premier.

Now this power has been given up. Under virtually all circumstances – short of a non-confidence vote – the government will face the people on a particular date, whether or not it is assured of its own popularity. Ontario thus joins the ranks of other democracies with election dates prescribed by law. Canada as a whole will soon follow suit.

Second, this is the first election in two decades in which the status of faith-based schools is an issue. Tory leader John Tory's proposal to fund such schools came unexpectedly earlier in the year, and it has caused controversy among both potential supporters and those who believe in the public system's monopoly of government funding. Many who embrace a more equitable provincial policy towards faith-based schools are uneasy with his plan to bring all of these into the public system under a single curriculum as a condition for funding. Opponents, including Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty, fear that funding faith-based schools will erode the quality of the public system and encourage sectarian divisions within the province. For such opponents the public schools are key to unifying the diverse communities in Ontario and preventing religious conflict. Some have even raised the spectre of islamic *madrassas* educating suicide bombers to frighten the public into refusing equitable funding for faith-based schools.

Reflecting on the outcry against Tory's proposal, an editorial in the *National Post* observes: "Canada is a two-faced country. Most times we are moderate, tolerant, easy-going people. But when elections roll around 'our elites suddenly become dogmatic secularists.'"

On the flap about teaching creationism in the religious schools, it comments:

"When it suits them our political and media elites laud these schools and their curricula as hallmarks of our multicultural society. (The same goes for aboriginal creation myths, which many Canadian students learn about in their history courses.) Has political correctness advanced to the point whereby every story of creation is politically acceptable except the one that happens to originate with the country's Christian majority?"

Apparently many supporters of faith-based schools were not certain what was included in the Tory proposal, and the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools arranged a number of meetings to explain. However, the finer points of the proposal are intended to be worked out at a later date by a commission to be headed by former Premier Bill Davis.

According to a story on the OACS website, John Vanasselt, the director of communications, says the OACS is comfortable with the Conservative's

proposal to fund faith-based schools.

"Our position is that since there are no more details, anything else is speculation and at this point we are very comfortable with the principles and we look forward to helping the PC's and the implementation commission work out the details when the time comes," says Vanasselt.

He adds that the OACS is in favour of public accountability for public money, and the three areas of compliance to receive funding as outlined by the Conservatives are not new to the schools.

The three areas are compliance with the Ontario curriculum, employing accredited teachers and participating in standardized testing. OACS schools already meet or exceed Ontario curriculum standards, students write provincial and national tests and all teachers have a bachelor's degree and teacher certification, says Vanasselt.

Members can read up on party positions on the OACS website



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Third and finally, Ontario voters will be deciding in a referendum whether to adopt a mixed-member-proportional (MMP) electoral system or to stick with the current first-past-the-post system. Although at the time of writing there has been some public debate about electoral reform, it is evident that it is not receiving the full attention it deserves from the politicians and the media. The two major parties have little to gain from such a reform, which would almost certainly reduce them to minority status, forcing them to form European-style coalition governments with other parties.

That said, many citizens are dissatisfied with the current options on election day. They are continually reduced to voting strategically for the party they dislike the least rather than for a party about which they are genuinely enthusiastic. The typical election brings or returns to power a single "majority" party most voters have opposed. Of course the majority is an artificial one, but this does not prevent the government from claiming a mandate from the people to exercise virtually all the political power.

MMP would change this by allowing more parties, and thus more voices, in the legislature. It has the advantage of keeping the best of the current system, allowing voters to continue to elect a member from a local riding, while also permitting them to vote for a favoured party – and not necessarily one of the parties currently on offer.

Is MMP worth supporting? While I do not use this column to endorse particular parties, I am quite willing to urge Ontario readers to vote in favour of MMP. See you on election day.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is the author of the award-winning *Political Visions and Illusions* (InterVarsity Press).

His weblog can be found at:

<<http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/>>



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Editorial

Ecclesial hugology 101

Harry der Nederlanden

On the online community that I often participate in – CRC Voices – the discussion recently turned to hugging in church. The discussion was inspired by a short blog on the subject by Richard Mouw, President of Fuller Seminary and a former prof at Calvin college. He confessed that once, some years ago, when he was visiting a charismatic church and he noticed that the greeter at the door was giving everyone who entered a hug, he delayed going in until the hugging greeter sat down. He didn't feel like being hugged by a complete stranger.

When his friends and family teased him about it, being a philosophy prof, he came up with a good Kuyperian rationale. Sphere sovereignty. Hugging is an activity proper to the family, but it is not a churchly activity. "You don't preach in bed, and you don't hug in church!" he told his students, who undoubtedly agreed – at least with the first part.

Since then Mouw has come to different conclusions. But from the same standpoint. Now he feels that, with the breakdown of the nuclear family and the loss of intimacy, the church is supposed to take over some of the functions formerly proper to the family – like dishing up hugs.

Mouw, it seems to me, is over-theologizing the issue. One has but to watch a wee bit of t.v. to see that everybody is hugging everybody else all over the place. Complete strangers sweep one another into their arms and linger cheek to jowl as if they were long-lost brothers greeting one another after an absence of decades. A handshake is not enough nowadays to demonstrate your benign intentions. To show that you're a truly congenial person who loves life and all humanity, you must hug. Otherwise you may be mistaken for an elitist or a discriminatory hugger who only hugs those he chooses. That's not democratic.

Hugging has become the new handshake – perhaps to cover up the increasing impersonality and lack of human intimacy in contemporary life. Deepened, no doubt, by those who visit in cyber space rather than in the real world, like those of us talking about hugging on CRC Voices.

Does hugging in church become part of that compensatory gesture we see enacted so enthusiastically by the pretty people from Hollywood?

I must admit to sharing a good bit of Mouw's reluctance to engage in indiscriminate hugging in church. I wouldn't

hug these folks when I meet them in the street, why should being in church prompt me to greater intimacy? A firm handshake, I've long felt, is entirely adequate. It also avoids a lot of awkwardness that attends the paradigm shift to hugging. Moreover, when a hug used to be something more personal and more meaningful than a mere handshake, you had something to move up to. Once a hug is common, what do you do if you want to demonstrate an even greater welcome? Must we then graduate to double-cheek kissing? Some celebrities are already beginning to do that to everyone they greet. I'm afraid it will eventually come to tickling.

In the online discussion, I was surprised at how many were reluctant huggers, and that many had questions about the proper protocols involved. Most agreed that some people were more huggable than others, which raises questions about whether, even if you do hug someone, are you at the same time perhaps signaling in some way that you're doing this reluctantly or perfunctorily, so that your hug feels like a non-hug? You get my drift? This could become very, very complicated indeed. A person may have to take lessons and others may have to go into hug-therapy.

Having given the matter some deep thought, I have ventured a few suggestions and observations. After studying a little cultural anthropology, one branch of which deals with how people touch and greet one another in advanced civilizations like ours, here are my first stabs at the new science of hugology, specifically ecclesial hugology.

First off, hugging should not be attempted after the greeting when your pastor tells you to turn and greet your neighbors in front of you and behind you. What results is something resembling a wrestling match as people drag one another across pews and chairs, lose their balance and nearly flip forward into the next row of seats. Our church has chairs, and it is possible to impale yourself painfully on a corner; especially if you are a taller-than-average male, this can be quite painful. To avoid such embarrassments, many people rush into the aisle to get more room, but that results in considerable shoving and elbowing as fellow greeters shoulder past one another to reach a buddy several rows down. One can come away from such mass aisle hug'm'ups more bruised than satisfied.

The hugging sessions should be reserved for after the service. That gives those with huggaphobia a chance to escape or to prepare themselves. Someone desperate to avoid being hugged can either run out the door or hurry to the coffee window and quickly grab two cups of coffee – one in each hand. That pretty effectively deters even determined huggers. Who'd risk being scalded on both shoulders with hot coffee? One drawback to that strategy is that you may develop a reputation as a coffee glutton or addict. To avoid that, you might begin carrying one of those zippered Bibles to church. With a zippered Bible in one hand and a coffee in the other, you may still be assaulted by a really determined hugger, but then you have the option of cracking him or her on the side of the head with your Bible – accidentally as it were. They'll get the word.

Although I'm still a novice at this hugging business, I've overcome my initial hangup. Customs and mores change, and I don't want to be antedeluvian, so I'm gradually learning. But I've approached the matter scientifically.

Hugging doesn't come in one size or style. There are various ways to go about it, some dictated by necessity and some a matter of technique and personal preference.

Some guys kind of sidle up to you from the side and put a hand on your shoulder and hug a bit side to side. If you're set up for a front hug, however, that may knock you a bit off

balance, and you don't want to end up with your head on the other fellow's shoulder. He may get the wrong idea.

There are also those who come to you straight on and then at the last moment do a little side-step and sort of do a drive-by hug, glancing off you to go to the next client. They are counting coup, seeing how many church members they can hug before everyone leaves, often even without meeting their eyes. For them it's a matter of quantity, not quality. That's not said in criticism. Who says that only hugging one person *up* with enthusiasm is better than spreading it around?

One might think that the straight forward full frontal hug would be the standard, the default position. Not so. Most people perform a slight pirouette and are thereby able to keep a little space between themselves and the person they're hugging. This may be just a tentative stage in the development of the ecclesial hug, mind you, and the hugs may escalate into full frontal bear hugs. If that happens, there may have to be some theological intervention from the pulpit: a series of sermons on how and how not to embrace your neighbor and your neighbor's wife or hubby.

Some reluctant huggers have developed a rather subtle technique. They approach with spread arms, but then instead of wrapping them around the huggie, they place their fingertips on the front of the person's shoulders. As they begin to move in, they also push back – ever so gently, of course. With children underfoot, you don't want to knock anyone off balance. It might raise the church's insurance premiums.

Some ambivalent huggers pull you toward them with one hand while pushing away with the other. That's a dangerous technique. One muscular hugger did that to me and I found myself being spun around like a top and propelled toward the exit.

In contrast, there are the double huggers. But this, too, may be a way of avoiding the bear hug. The double hugger comes first from one side with a quickie hug and then switches to the other. The two halves, I suppose, add up to a whole, but with a little breathing space in between. I fear, though, that the double huggers may be contemplating an escalation – to a Russian kiss on each cheek. If that happens, I'll stop shaving Sunday mornings.

Sometimes the teapot hug is useful, especially when hugging big-bosomed women. You keep your distance with your feet and tip your upper body forward. Watch the incline, however, or you may suddenly pitch forward with embarrassing consequences. I've seen the double teapot hug performed quite delicately between two big-bosomed women. It goes to show that hugging can become a refined art form.

Hugging is not without some risk to skinny people, however. Some of the more hefty members, proud of their healthy physique, seem to think that God loves a power-hugger more than a gentle one. It goes with the new emphasis on power religion and power prayer. Consequently, some of our more fragile brother and sisters may stagger away from some of these hugs feeling a bit crushed and even mutilated.

By now, having been run through the briar patch of hugging, you may wish to revert to a simple handshake. But there's no going back once the process is in motion. With a little guidance from ecclesial hugology 101, you're all set to develop your own special technique. Don't be stand-offish – get in there and give it a go.

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Opinion

How not to fight this war

If this agenda [silencing critics by lawsuits and other threats] is not explicitly and actively resisted we will see not only further censorship and self-censorship in the West, but increased repression in the Muslim world.

(Paul Marshall, nationalreviewonline, August 31, 2007)

Harry Antonides

Always on the lookout for informative books about Islam, I noticed this intriguing title *Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the Islamic World*, by J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins. This book was published by the Cambridge University Press (CUP) in 2006, but when I tried to buy it, I discovered that it was no longer available.

A little digging revealed a remarkable series of events behind the sudden disappearance of this book. Although the mainline press has ignored this story, it calls for the full attention of all who believe that freedom of the press is an essential component of a free society. This remarkable story has its origin in the British High Court in London, or better, in the vast storehouse of petrodollars now available to the Saudi government.

Freedom of the press under siege

Billionaire Saudi Sheik Khalid bin Mahfouz, with ties to the Saudi royal family and the Western business world, and former head of the National Commercial Bank of Saudi Arabia, sued the publisher – not the authors. He charged that the book contained certain defamatory allegations about him and his family in connection with the funding of terrorism.

His lawsuit demanded that CUP issue a public apology, pay the plaintiff's court fees and damages, destroy all unsold copies, and ask all libraries to remove the book from their shelves. Mr. Justice David Eady wasted no time to rule in favour of the plaintiff.

Cambridge University Press put up no fight in defending the integrity of the two authors, who happen to be U.S. citizens. Nor did it give them an opportunity to back up their allegations. Instead, it issued a fulsome apology posted on its website. In a letter directly addressed to bin Mahfouz, CUP wrote:

Throughout the book there are serious and defamatory allegations about yourself and your family, alleging support for terrorism through your businesses, family and charities, and directly.

As a result of what we now know, we accept and acknowledge that all of those allegations about you and your family, businesses and charities are entirely and manifestly false.

Bin Mahfouz' lawyer stated that his client would not permit any funds to be transferred to al-Qaeda or any other terrorist organization. But the fact is that the Mahfouz bank has regularly transferred money to its principal charity, the Muwafaq or "Blessed Relief" Foundation.

Facts tell a different story

Mark Steyn writes that in 2001 the U.S. Treasury Department named Blessed Relief as "an Al-Qaida front that receives funding from wealthy Saudi businessmen" and its chairman as a "specially designated global terrorist." The Treasury concluded: "Saudi businessmen have been transferring millions of dollars to bin Laden through Blessed Relief." (Mark Steyn, "The Vanishing Jihad Exposés," ORegister.com, August 5, 2007)

Steyn further claims that this particular "charity" "seems to have as its chief purpose to fund Jihad and to seed Islamism, as it has done in Chechnya and in the Balkans, where "it played a key role in replacing a traditionally moderate Islam with a form of Mitteleuropean Wahhabism." For example, Ayadi Chafiq bin Muhammad, the former head of the Blessed Relief branch in Croatia, was "named as a bin Laden financier by the U.S. government and disappeared from the United Kingdom shortly after 9/11."

Alyssa A. Lappen, posted on the website of American Congress for Truth, reports that the information in *Alms for Jihad* is well documented in official U.S. Government sources. In addition, she reports that these statements about bin Mahfouz' support of terrorism "were further corroborated by French intelligence officials at the General Directorate of External Security (DGSE) and published in the French daily, *Le Monde*. The DGSE reported that in 1998, they knew bin Mahfouz to be an architect of the banking scheme built to benefit Osama bin Laden; both U.S. and British intelligence services knew it too."

Bin Mahfouz has made generous use of the U.K. libel laws, casting a libel chill that few dare to risk. He has successfully sued or threatened to sue a number of U.S. and U.K. publishers. (U.K. libel law favours the plaintiff who simply has to file a case, and then the defendant has to establish his innocence by proving that what he has written is true and was not done with malice.)

In contrast, the U.S. libel law is different, and freedom of the press is famously protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This is the reason that bin Mahfouz' attempt to silence another U.S. citizen led to a different outcome than his earlier success in the Cambridge University Press case.

Stopped by the First Amendment?

In 2003, Dr. Rachel Ehrenfeld, an American investigative reporter and director of the American Center for Democracy,



London Central Mosque

published her *Funding Evil: How Terrorism is Financed – and How to Stop it*. Her book also traced the tangled web of support for terrorism, including those managed by bin Mahfouz. She provided ample proof for her claims by citing official documents and other sources available to the public.

Bin Mahfouz also succeeded in suing Ehrenfeld for libel in the British High Court presided by the same judge who ruled in the CUP case. Mr. Justice David Eady ordered Ehrenfeld to apologize, retract, pay bin Mahfouz \$225,913.37 in damages and destroy copies of her book. But Ehrenfeld and her publisher, Bonus Books, did not meekly submit. On the contrary, Jeffrey Stern, president and publisher of Bonus Books, had this to say about the action of the Cambridge University Press:

I find it utterly appalling that any publisher – let alone one with the history and perceived credibility of Cambridge University Press – would allow themselves to be bullied into making such a decision.... What happened to freedom of the press? We're talking about two very credible American writers here. The very idea that these authors could be silenced in the U.S. by a British Court is not only outrageous and fraught with frightening journalistic implications, it's simply un-American.

Rather than responding to the false claims against her, Ehrenfeld applied to the Southern District Court of New York for a ruling that the U.K. court judgment is unenforceable in the U.S. On June 8, 2007, a court unanimously found that Ehrenfeld's case merits referral to a federal court.

Furthermore, the justices took the unusual step of referring the matter of jurisdiction over bin Mahfouz to the New York Court of Appeals. On June 27, 2007, they unanimously denied bin Mouhfaz' request to reconsider that decision. Subsequently, the New York Court of Appeals has agreed to hear the arguments on jurisdiction this fall.

Much hinges on the outcome of this case since at stake is the bedrock of a free society. Veteran American Civil Liberties Union board member, Harvey Silverglade, told Ehrenfeld that this case is one of "the most important First Amendment cases in the past 25 years" and its potential for damaging the freedom of the press in the U.S. is "not yet readily recognized."

Nagging questions

The nagging questions will not go away: Why would the publishing arm of the second oldest English University, whose very purpose is to advance and defend the free flow of ideas, so quickly surrender? And why would the nation with the longest tradition of hard-won parliamentary democracy lend its institutions to treat in a cavalier manner the rights and freedoms of citizens?

See **How not to** on page 6

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Opinion/Environment

MMPR and the Ontario election

The injection of proportional representation into the 2007 Ontario election has brought some interesting exchanges among pro-life, pro-family groups.

Campaign Life Coalition and REAL Women have both come out against Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMPR); while their ally, the Family Coalition Party, has responded strongly in favour of MMPR. Social conservative author Tim Bloedow (author of *State vs Church*) has weighed in on the pro-MMPR side.

The CHP, for 20 years, has campaigned for proportional representation (now used in all but three of the West's industrial democracies with populations over 8 million) and specifically, MMPR.

Objections raised by CLC and REAL Women seem to relate mostly to how MMPR might affect their ability to lobby politicians.

In the CHP's view, that's a red herring. Whatever the rules, the ability to work within them will be roughly the same for all shades of opinion. What is really important is the capacity of the electoral system to give a representative voice to all shades of opinion.

To choose a system on the grounds that it might give "our side" an advantage is actually anti-democratic.

But in any case, anti-moralist forces in Canada have been very effective at manipulating the existing system. The best counterweight to that is not to try to manipulate the system the way "the other side" does, but a three-stage strategy of:

- 1 – Informing the electorate (e.g., Stephanie Gray's vivid abortion awareness campaign) and informing MPs (as CLC does)
- 2 – Ensuring that, as nearly as possible, every citizen's voice is represented in the legislature (supporting MMPR)... and then
- 3 – Continuing to persuade as many citizens as possible that policies consistent with the Biblical morality on which Canada was founded are best for all Canadians (as REAL Women and the CHP do).

The "first-past-the-post" system dates from an era when virtually everyone in the "riding" knew the candidates' character and policies. That's no longer true. That's why political parties have grown in significance: people can find out (to the extent that the mainstream media are willing to refrain from censoring or distorting information) what each party stands for; then they can vote for the candidate/party

combination that best represents their own views. That's why "list candidates" named by the parties are not a threat: the parties that nominate them constitute a standard for the voters.

There is one advantage to MMPR that is rarely mentioned: it opens the door to public service to people of intelligence and character who may now be excluded by the built-in bias of a media-dominated system. Our present electoral system favours "actors" – people who look good on-camera and on-stage. But there are people of intelligence and character who are not "actors": they may be physically unattractive, or they may not speak in public as well as they think or write. Those people have little chance of being nominated under today's media-oriented system.

However, policy-makers within the parties know people who would be excellent public servants, even if they don't present well on-camera. The parties can add such people to their "list candidate" nominations, and thus open a channel for public service that was previously closed to those people.

Our present system eliminates many people who might be good public servants, but are not attractive "actors". Opening the door to such people could actually improve governance in Canada.

But the final deciding factor is this: our old FPTP system has repeatedly resulted in gross inequities of representation. In the USA, some political analysts have pointed out how the "two-party" system – towards which the FPTP electoral system strongly trends – has been a "disaster", because both big parties, following the same survey and focus group data, end up offering essentially identical platforms – and all other voices get submerged. For one such viewpoint, read *The Two-Party System: A Catastrophic Failure* at <http://www.intellectualconservative.com/2007/08/30/the-two-party-system-a-catastrophic-failure/>

MMPR offers the opportunity for all citizens to know that their opinions will have a voice in the legislature. Lobbyists (including "our guys") will have to lobby the voters, not the elected politicians – which is as it should be.

That, alone, makes it a better system – MMPR is an idea whose time has come, and we urge Ontarians (and soon, hopefully, all Canadians) to support it.

Ron Gray, National Leader Christian Heritage Party of Canada

How not to ... continued from page 5

Above all, why would a British court accord all the privileges and rights of the West to a citizen of a country that does not accord even the most basic freedoms, notably the freedom of religion to its citizens? And what is worse, this same country is spending billions of dollars to spread its radical version of Islam across the world. Mark Steyn puts this issue in perspective:

We've gotten used to one way multiculturalism: The world accepts that you can't open an Episcopal or Congregational church in Jeddah or Riyadh, but every week the Saudis can open radical mosques and madrassahs and pro-Saudi think-tanks in London and Toronto and Dearborn, Mich., and Falls Church, Va. And their global reach extends a little further day by day, inch by inch, in the lengthening shadows, as the lights go out one by one around the world.

Osama bin Laden and a raft of other proponents of radical Islam have declared war on the West. Whether we like it or not, we cannot avoid this confrontation. This war takes place with weapons that kill, but also on the battlefield of ideas and beliefs. It is here that the enemy is cunning, determined and wickedly clever in subverting the very freedoms and institutions of the democracies to use against us.

It will require a massive injection of courage and truth telling to win this war of ideas.

To that end we had better pray that the likes of Burr, Collins, and Ehrenfeld, and all other truth tellers, will win the day. But we should take nothing for granted and also be prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder with them.

*Harry Antonides,
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Toronto turns to lake water for air conditioning



Fred Langan

Toronto – The Toronto Dominion Centre is the most distinctive set of office towers in the city's financial district. Three of the five black buildings were designed by Mies van der Rohe and built in the late 1960s. So was their air conditioning.

The three original towers, which contain about 3 million square feet of office space, were among the first buildings connected to Toronto's Deep Lake Water Cooling System in September 2004, saving the local electric utility 7.5 megawatts of electrical demand every working day.

"This conservation measure takes the pressure off Toronto's electrical system," says Blair Peberdy, vice president of Toronto Hydro, the local utility. The city's electricity supply tightens during the hot summer months, he says, so "removing air conditioning from the grid helps the system."

The first stage of the project's construction ran three 63-inch diameter pipes along the city's lake bed about three miles out into Lake Ontario. There it draws water 272 feet below the surface. At that depth, the water's temperature is almost always constant, protected by a strata of water above it called a thermocline.

"Below the thermocline, the water stays at 39 degrees Fahrenheit almost the entire year. That's the natural phenomenon that is our renewable resource," says Kevin Loughborough, vice president, major projects, at Enwave Energy Corp., which owns and runs the Deep Lake Water Cooling project.

The water is piped to a filtration plant on Toronto Island, less than a mile off the city's shoreline. It then continues to a heat-transfer station on the mainland squeezed between the Rogers Centre and the downtown Gardner Expressway. Here the lake water runs along one side of a metal plate in a heat exchanger, transferring the water's "coolness" to water running through pipes on the other side of the plate.

The lake water is sent along to reservoirs, providing about 15 percent of the city's drinking water. Since the water comes from so far out in the lake, it is free from such contaminants as algae and geosmin, which cause an unpleasant taste and odor in Toronto's water in the late summer and early fall.

The water used to cool the city's buildings travels in a closed loop inside 48-inch pipes that run for 15 miles beneath the city, six stories deep.

The cool water passes through metal coils inside participating office buildings. Fans blow over the coils, forcing cool air into each building's central air-conditioning system.

Toronto's system is connected to 41 buildings in the central business district, and a total of 57 buildings have signed on to use the system. Built at a cost of \$200 million over four years, the system has two shareholders: the City of Toronto (47 percent ownership) and OMERS, the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (53 percent).

Significant energy savings during peak periods

In the early 20th century, movie theaters provided air conditioning by blowing air over melting blocks of ice, which would cool the audience. Melting one ton of ice per hour is equal to one ton-hour of air conditioning. Using that measurement, the entire project has a cooling load of 54,493 ton-hours, enough to cool 27,000 houses.

Stewardship

But the electric utility prefers to measure the benefits in megawatts saved.

The two newer TD towers, modeled after van der Rohe's designs, were connected to the system last fall. For the first time this past summer, the entire TD Centre was air-conditioned by the water pulled in from Lake Ontario, saving a total of 10 megawatts of electricity during peak periods. Another 12 megawatts are similarly saved from connections to the Royal Bank Plaza and the Metro Centre, home to the local city government. All those buildings are close to Lake Ontario.

Perhaps the most ambitious connection is Queen's Park, seat of the provincial government, located about two miles from the lake. The legislature and some nearby government office buildings were connected in April, saving four megawatts of electricity.

New buildings that join the Deep Lake Water Cooling System should never have to build cooling units. Among them is a 25-story condominium complex built by Tridel, a local developer, in downtown Toronto. It was hooked into the project from the start.

The system has other benefits besides saving energy. Most office and apartment towers have cooling units on their roofs. Removing them means the roof can be used for something else, perhaps a running track. The three original van der Rohe towers have cooling units built between floors, appearing as black, windowless bands from the outside. The owner is now working out how to convert those areas into office space, which is almost as precious as electricity in downtown Toronto.

Still, the largest benefit created by the cooling system has been to reduce the city's demand for electricity during in the peak summer season. The two transformer stations at each end of Toronto's financial district have been hard-pressed to keep up with demand from computers, lighting, and air conditioning.

"Toronto Hydro gives Enwave a check every time we sign a new building on their grid," says Enwave's Mr. Loughborough. "We call it 'nega-watts,' where instead of creating new generating capacity, you lower the demand for power."

Other cities could benefit from similar systems

Toronto's cooling project is the largest of its kind in the world and the only one that offers both drinking water and cooling. Other cities use similar cooling systems: In Sweden, Stockholm's system, which uses cold ocean water, is about two-thirds the size of Toronto's.

Other cities that might benefit for using cold offshore water:

Chicago: The city has harsher winters than Toronto and sits beside frigid Lake Michigan. But Lake Michigan is shallower than Lake Ontario. To reach cold, deep water, it would have to lay pipes out 19 miles, six times the distance of Toronto's system.

Tokyo: It has deep water in Tokyo Bay, but hasn't done anything to try to exploit it for cooling yet.

Geneva: It's an ideal candidate, as Lake Geneva is cold and deep. It has inquired about the system.

New York: The city has contacted Enwave engineers, but the ocean off New York is too shallow. There are opportunities for a smaller system in upstate New York, however. Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., runs a cooling system similar to Toronto's, using Lake Cayuga as a source.

Some additional water facts

~ Last year Americans spent more on bottled water than on movie tickets – \$15 billion.

~ The bottles add up to some \$1 billion worth of plastic (derived from oil).

~ They litter our streets, our parks, our rivers, lakes and streams. And clog our landfills.

~ It began as a healthy alternative to soft drinks but has become a craze, for some almost an addiction – they carry their plastic bottle wherever they go.

~ If you paid the same price for your tap water as you pay for the cheapest bottled water, your water bill would amount to over \$10,000 per year.

~ In Fiji, a state-of-the-art factory spins out more than a million bottles a day of the hippest bottled water on the U.S. market. Meanwhile, more than half the people in Fiji do not have safe, reliable drinking water.

Water care

Not too long ago, bottled water was a rare thing and no one questioned the safety of tap water in Ontario. Surrounded by the Great Lakes and thousands of smaller lakes, we took good sweet water for granted, and for all the water we can see, there is so much more water underground. I read somewhere that, in Ontario, our surface water represents less than three per cent of all the fresh water we have underground! It is a tremendous resource that God has blessed us with.

Ever since the Walkerton polluted public water incident in which a number of people died from drinking tainted water and many more became seriously ill, Ontarians have become very cautious about their drinking water. If there is any positive outcome it is that our municipalities are now more vigilant about ensuring safe drinking water. Aside from the deaths and illnesses another bad side effect is the cost and energy spent on bottled water today. We are now becoming aware that bottled water is maybe not such a good thing due to the possible contaminants leaching from the plastic container the water is kept in – especially if the water has been sitting for some time. Now we hear many people saying that tap water is safer after all.

Naaman complained about the water of the Jordan River – when he was instructed to bathe in it by the prophet Elisha (2Kings 5:12), and he finally only did so after his servants persuaded him to do so. The Israelites complained bitterly about the water at their first resting stop after miraculously crossing the Red Sea:

When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter (That is why the place is called Marah.) So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, 'What are we to drink?' Exodus 15: 23, 24.

The Bible has many more water stories: Jesus turning water to wine; the healing water of Shiloh; John's baptism of repentance; Jesus' baptism; Peter walking on water; the Samaritan woman and living water; etc. etc.!

Water is important to us and is vital to life. Jesus referred to himself as the living water – water that would quench all our thirst forever.

Yes, water is important, and clean water is not something to be taken for granted. In the first few months of my first term with CRWRC in Bangladesh (1976), I became very sick and it was largely due to ingesting parasites in contaminated water. Boiling all our drinking water became a routine that we followed throughout the years we served in Bangladesh and India. We wouldn't dream of drinking water from a tap – not even to rinse our mouths after brushing our teeth.

In the past number of years, the states and provinces that contain the Great Lakes have signed agreements that seek to regulate and protect our shared water resources. This consortium of states and provinces is on guard for these resources. There is

tremendous pressure to ship or pipe Great Lakes water to dry southern states. In Aberfoyle, a small community south of Guelph, residents have raised the alarm about commercial companies that are sucking millions of liters of clean clear water each day from the ground water reserves underneath their homes and village. Did you know about the diversion of a river to feed the vast Northern Alberta tar sands operations that provide us with more gasoline for our cars? What are the costs of these projects? Ask the Aboriginal people who depend on the river for fishing and hunting. We need to be on guard for the abuse of our water resources. The hue and cry from those who raise the issue already has engineers coming up with better methods which minimize water use. We need to advocate responsible use and care and stop uncontrolled, unlimited abuse.

Water is precious. Ask the people who have been forced to live in refugee camps and their women who risk their lives to get water for their families. Consider how important water is to you and then commit to be more careful with its stewardship. Let's not take our shared water resource for granted! Whether we have a lot or little – we need to be good stewards of this precious resource.

Stewardly tip: Check your water consumption habits: do you let the water run when you rinse dishes or shave? What about the wash: do you run small loads in full water? Do you water the lawn or use excessive water when washing the car? Consider using small glass refillable bottles. Fill them with clean tap water and eliminate the use of plastic bottled water, or, if you must buy plastic, at least re-use them a few times. Think of ways that you can spare our water resources.

Readers: Share your Stewardly Tips so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestions (by mail to *Christian Courier* or by email to my address below) and provide your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask you for more details.

Next issue: Bio-Economy

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Church

Christians refute charges of insulting Buddhism in Sri Lanka

Anto Akkara

Colombo, (ENI)—Church officials and aid workers are denying as “fabricated” allegations by a Buddhist nationalist group that Christian groups were insulting Buddhism while doing their evangelization work in Sri Lanka.

“These allegations are so ridiculous and far-fetched. I don’t want to waste my time in responding to this,” Godfrey Yogarajah, general secretary of the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka, told Ecumenical News International. Yogarajah was responding to allegations made by leaders of the Jathika Hela Urumaya (National Heritage Party) of Buddhist monks when a delegation from the World Council of Churches met them at their office in Colombo. The WCC delegation visited as a mission to support Christian communities in the nation that has a Buddhist majority, but which has been plagued by protracted ethnic and religious conflict.

“The Lord Buddha is being insulted by Christian evangelical groups,” Narendra

Gunatillake, the National Heritage Party’s secretary for international affairs, told the WCC delegation. The WCC has Orthodox, Anglican and traditional Protestant churches among its members, but few churches from the evangelical tradition.

Gunatillake showed posters of biscuits made in the shape of Buddha. He said the biscuits were being distributed in the welfare centres run by evangelical groups. Party leaders also showed posters of candles in the shape of Buddha wearing a wig, which they alleged evangelical groups were using to depict Buddhism as “devilish”.

“We have no problem with the mainline churches,” Gunatillake said, speaking of the Roman Catholic Church and he said the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka, which groups eight Protestant churches, was also acceptable in his eyes. But he claimed that the welfare programs and centres run by the evangelical groups were pursuing a missionary agenda with little respect for Buddhism and

were doling out money to convert Buddhists to Christianity.

Lucky De Silva, an independent evangelical pastor, said he, however, wonders who made the posters. “No Christian would dare to make such biscuits or candles [in the shape of Buddha] as they are well aware of how these groups would react,” he told ENI.

Dion Schoorman, director for World Vision Sri Lanka, said, “There’s no merit in responding to such allegations” when asked about the National Heritage Party’s accusation that his organization was using its aid programs, including its tsunami reconstruction projects, to convert Buddhists to Christianity.

World Vision is an international charity supported by many evangelical churches. Aid workers point out that World Vision has carried out massive tsunami relief and reconstruction programs in Sri Lanka and has built nearly 4,000 houses for tsunami survivors co-ordinating its work with Buddhist monasteries.

Citing Swedish cartoon row, US group issues media guidelines

Chris Herlinger

New York, (ENI)—A recent cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad published by a Swedish newspaper and condemned in Islamic countries, demonstrates the need for a journalistic code of standards when depicting religion, says a U.S.-based advocacy group that has now developed such a set of standards.

A charter developed by Institute on Religion and Public Policy in Washington DC, “takes into account the paramount principles of freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, and attempts to strike an appropriate balance that preserves both of these fundamental freedoms,” said Joseph K. Grieboski, the institute’s president. Among other things, the charter’s four-part declaration states that, “A responsible media never promotes religious hatred. It scrupulously avoids engendering hostility towards religions and their members likely to lead to imminent violence or systematic deprivation of human rights.”

A group of Swedish Muslims called off a demonstration after a meeting with the country’s prime minister that followed the publication by the *Nerikes Allehanda* newspaper of a cartoon that placed the Prophet Muhammad’s head on the body of a dog. “I personally would never intentionally act in a way that could be perceived by other religions as provocative or offensive,” Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt was quoted as saying by the Agence France-Presse news agency. He also insisted that press freedom and freedom of expression were “an inalienable part of our country and our democracy”.

Nerikes Allehanda commented, “It is only natural to feel offended. But that doesn’t give one the right to curtail or annul others’ freedom of expression. Freedom of expression is the lifeblood of democracy.”

The Institute on Religion and Public Policy said its charter also states, “A responsible media does not refer to religions or religious institutions in a prejudicial, biased or

pejorative context; when religious references are essential to the reported matter or facilitate understanding, they are made accurately, fairly, impartially and respectfully.”

The publication of the Swedish cartoon stemmed from news coverage of attempts to exhibit drawings of Muhammad in the country. Citing security concerns, at least two art galleries declined to exhibit the drawings. Ulf Johansson, the editor of *Nerikes Allehanda*, defended his publication of the cartoon, and in a commentary on the issue criticised self-censorship among exhibition galleries.

Officials in Iran, Jordan, Pakistan and Egypt condemned the cartoon’s publication, with a spokesperson for the Jordanian government saying, “Such cartoons do not serve interfaith dialogue and co-existence, in which Jordan believes.”

The text of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy charter can be found at: www.mediacharter.org.

‘Don’t sell land to foreigners’, Polish bishop tells farmers

Jonathan Luxmoore

Warsaw, (ENI)—A Polish bishop is urging the country’s farmers not to sell land to foreigners in order to prevent the European Union imposing injustices upon those who till the soil for living. “Our hope lies, as never before, with those who work the countryside. You face a hugely important and difficult task – to defend Polish land and to defend our country,” said Stanislaw Napierala, the Roman Catholic bishop of Kalisz.

The bishop was preaching to thousands of Polish farmers at a harvest Mass in the central Poland town of Pleszew. He said farmers had been “unjustly treated” since May 2004, when Poland joined the EU. The bishop charged that the EU favours large landowners when it comes to financial benefits.

“To make a profit, you have to own plenty

of land and produce a lot. Most Polish farmers don’t have it easy and can hardly make ends meet,” Bishop Napierala asserted.

Catholic Church leaders have frequently defended the rights of Polish country-dwellers, who make up 40 percent of the population but live mostly on subsistence farms of fewer than eight hectares (20 acres). Although the rural sector is scheduled to obtain 26 billion euros (US\$35 billion) under the EU’s 2007-2013 budget, this is well below the figure allocated to Western producers due to new subsidy regulations which some see as working to the detriment of the latest EU members.

Many farmers have faced hardships because of a current labour shortage and a spring frost that wiped out 90 percent of Poland’s fruit and vegetable crop earlier in the year. They say EU policy is deliberately designed to put small- and

medium-sized farms out of business.

In his sermon, Napierala said many young people saw “no future in agricultural work”, adding that foreign producers would under EU rules soon be entitled to buy Polish land without restriction. “They have the money and will certainly be ready to pay a high price for Polish land, which will still be cheaper than in their own countries,” the bishop told farmers at the Mass, which was attended by local members of parliament and government officials.

“Our forefathers defended the land against forced communist collectivization and foreign aggression, paying a high price in blood and life,” said Napierala. “Today, our generation may lose the same land for little money compared to what aggressors and occupiers were made to pay for going to war against Poland in times past.”

Russian church leader warns of crisis over ethical norms

Stephen Brown

Sibiu, Romania, (ENI)—A senior leader of the Russian Orthodox Church has said the major churches in Europe need to join forces and seek allies from other faiths to ensure society upholds traditional ethical values. But he warned that Christians who no longer stood for moral norms previously accepted by the church were undermining this task. “A struggle for a single public morality and for Christian values in today’s Europe is impossible without joint actions, first of all among Christians of major confessions, regardless of their doctrinal differences,” Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad said on September 5.

He was speaking at the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in the Romanian city of Sibiu, where about 2500 representatives from Europe’s main Christian traditions have gathered. Kirill is head of the external relations department of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church and he told the assembly that, “Christians should seek allies in other religions who share moral positions similar to the Christian attitudes.”

He asserted, however, that the church itself was facing divisions about ethical norms that undermined this task. “It can be stated with certainty, that until recently all Christians had unanimous views at least on man and the moral norms of his life,” Kirill said in his address to the assembly. “Today, this unity has been broken as well. Some Christian communities have unilaterally reviewed or are reviewing the norms of life defined by the Word of God.”

“Believers cannot recognize at the same time the value of life and the right to death, the value of family and validity of same-sex relations, the protection of child’s rights and the deliberate destruction of human embryos for medical purposes,” the Russian church leader said.

Kirill’s remarks come against the background of divisions within the worldwide Anglican Communion and other Christian groups about homosexuality, as well as moves in some countries to place same-sex partnerships on the same basis as heterosexual marriage. Attempts to legalize euthanasia have also been advanced in some countries.

Speaking to journalists after addressing the Sibiu assembly, Kirill said that divisions within Christianity about ethical issues were putting at risk the ecumenical movement for church unity. “We are now approaching a crisis of the ecumenical movement,” said Kirill. “We need to have a very strong moral basis to continue on the ecumenical pilgrimage.”

The Sibiu assembly is organized by the Conference of European Churches and the Council of European (Roman Catholic) Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE). The two groupings account for most of Europe’s Roman Catholic, Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox churches. The present gathering in Romania follows similar assemblies in Basel, Switzerland, in 1989 and Graz, Austria, in 1997.

Church

European church gathering joins green efficiency fight

Stephen Brown

Sibiu, Romania, (ENI)—Delegates taking the plane to the Third European Ecumenical Assembly are being asked to pay 15 euros (about US\$20) towards the cost of offsetting the ecological burden of their flight.

"This amount doesn't claim to be a full compensation of the environmental impact of the EEA3, but it allows us to regenerate a forest for the benefit of the local environment in Sibiu," delegates are told in a flyer they receive when they register. Current estimates, it states, suggest that air traffic now contributes up to 10 percent of the human-induced greenhouse gases that lead to climate change.

Organizers say that each contribution of 15 euros will allow 48 young trees to be planted by the Protestant parish of Hammersdorf-Gusterita in a forest five kilometres from Sibiu and the donation will also support their maintenance for three years. Since 2002 the parish has reclaimed 30 hectares (74 acres) of forest, seven hectares of which are now in urgent need of reforestation.

The European Christian Environmental Network, which is supporting the initiative, says global climate change is one of the

greatest threats to present and future generations. "For too long the churches have remained silent about the ecological crisis. In recent years, however, they have increasingly become aware of the urgency of the situation," the network notes. It has implemented a series of measures to make the assembly more ecologically friendly. These include the use of organic products from an association of Romanian, Transylvanian-German and Hungarian peasants, the availability of fair trade coffee, using recycled paper for assembly documents, and waste separation.

The Sibiu gathering is the first European ecumenical assembly where such eco-management measures have been taken.

The total cost of the reforestation project is 12,000 euros and if the organizers receive more than this, they will give the extra for other projects to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions in Sibiu, such as investing in solar energy for church buildings, and increasing energy efficiency.

:: Web site: European Christian Environmental Network at Sibiu: www.ecen.org/cms/index.php?page=sibiu

Turkish-based Orthodox Patriarch cautions on European unity

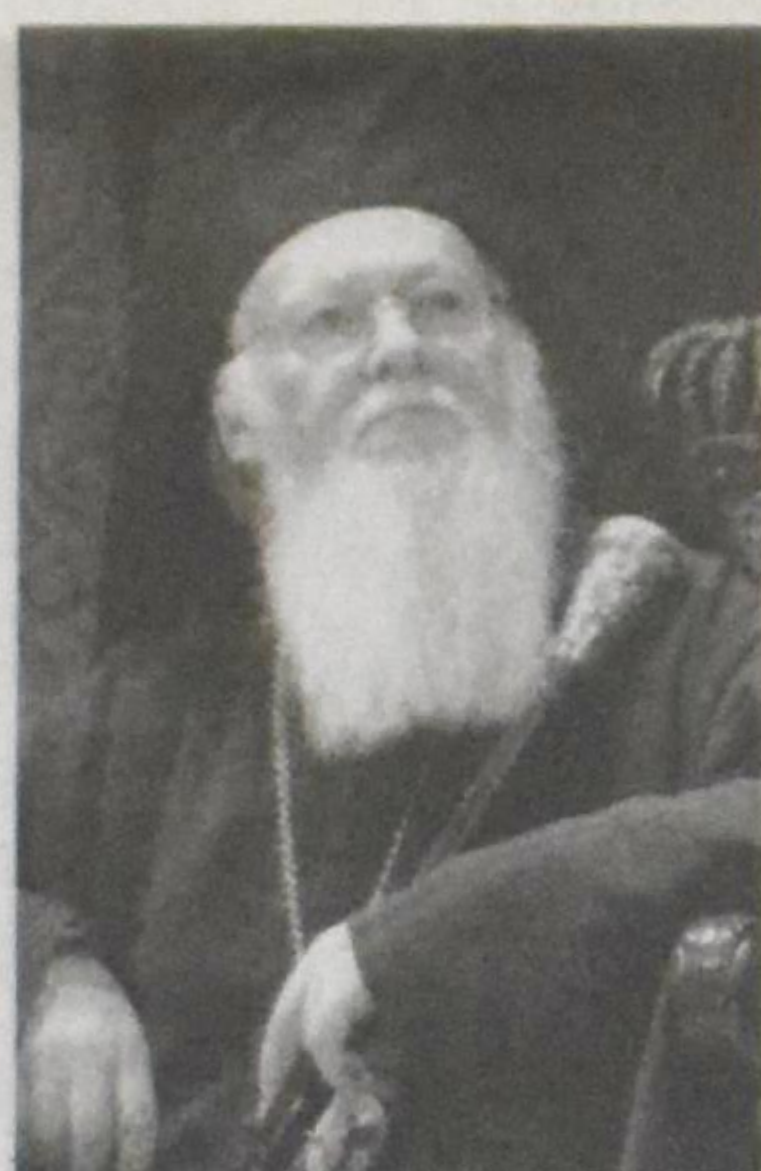
Stephen Brown

Sibiu, Romania, (ENI)—Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos I, seen by many of the world's Orthodox Christians as their spiritual leader, has warned against the construction of a European unity based solely on financial and political considerations. The patriarch made his remarks at the Third European Ecumenical Assembly.

Europe needs to be a society "where human rights and the fundamental values of peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and mutual support prevail", said Bartholomeos, who is seen as a supporter of Turkish membership of the European Union. "At the same time, we categorically underline the importance of respect for life, the supreme value of marriage and family, the support and assistance of the poor, forgiveness and mercy," the Patriarch added.

In his speech, the Patriarch said he hoped the assembly would "result in specific and positive steps" towards Christian reconciliation. "It is only through sincere and objective dialogue that we shall also be able to contribute in a crucial way to the consolidation of reconciliation and communion even among the peoples of Europe, supporting and promoting the creation of a new Europe, where Christian principles and values will rule on the basis of the spiritual heritage of Christianity," said Bartholomeos.

Participants applauded a pledge by the Orthodox leader that he would do everything in his power "to promote the sacred work of restoration of full ecclesiastical and sacramental communion among churches". He said he hoped the ecumenical assembly would "result in specific and positive steps" towards Christian reconciliation.



Christian groups offered support to Bartholomeos after he was called to testify in a Turkish court for allegedly violating an order barring him from using his traditional title of "Ecumenical Patriarch".

Bartholomeos was summoned to testify before a prosecuting authority after giving a speech at a world conference of Orthodox youth in July, during which he defended his office as "a historical title" recognized by the "whole world". A Turkish court had ruled in June that the Istanbul-based patriarchate was authorized to perform religious functions only among Turkey's 6000-strong Greek Orthodox community. The court said the patriarchate had no right under Turkish law to call itself "ecumenical", a Greek word meaning "universal". Turkey regards the title as having political overtones that could undermine the country's national sovereignty. The patriarchate says the term is purely an internal church designation and has no political implications. The Ecumenical Patriarch has what is called a "primacy of honour" among the world's Christian Orthodox leaders.

Istanbul was once the Byzantine Christian capital of Constantinople but now belongs to Muslim-majority and politically-secular Turkey. The use of the term "ecumenical" for the Patriarch of Constantinople goes back to the 6th century.

Romania's city of churches has message for Europe

Stephen Brown

Sibiu Romania, (ENI) — Down a cobbled street in the Romanian city of Sibiu, a Lutheran church that contains a valuable pre-Reformation altar stands a few hundred metres from the city's Orthodox Cathedral. The cathedral, built at the beginning of the 20th century, is in the style of the renowned Hagia Sophia (Church of Holy Wisdom) built in what is present-day Istanbul.

A little further along the street is a Hungarian-speaking Reformed church. Not far away is the city's biggest Roman Catholic church, topped by an onion dome and built in baroque fashion at the beginning of the 18th century, when Sibiu was part of the Habsburg empire.

Another couple of hundred metres further on lies the Lutheran 'Stadtpfarrkirche', which towers above the centre of the city, and was completed in 1520, thirty years before the city's then-majority German population adopted the Reformation of Martin Luther.

"There has been a coexistence of different religious traditions here for centuries," Lutheran Bishop Christoph Klein, whose headquarters are in Sibiu, told Ecumenical News International. Klein is the author of a new book, *Kirchen der Stadt – Stadt der Kirchen (Churches of the city – City of churches)*, launched on the eve of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly.

Most of Romania's 22 million people belong to the Orthodox church, but the many different church buildings in Sibiu testify to the shifting political allegiances of the region of Transylvania, where the city is located. The name of the city also testifies to this mix of different peoples and cultures. Sibiu is the Romanian name for the city. In German it is known as Hermannstadt, and for Hungarians it is Nagyszeben.

Bishop Klein himself traces his roots back to German settlers brought to the region in the middle of the 12th century by Hungarian King Geisa II, who wanted to tap their skill in battle to ward off marauding Mongols, Turks and Tartars. The descendants of the settlers now account for only about 2000 of Sibiu's 150,000 people, but at the time of the Reformation they were in the majority, and in 1550 Hermannstadt, then part of the Kingdom of Hungary, became a Lutheran stronghold.

Twenty-one years later, in 1571, Transylvania became an autonomous principality under Ottoman rule. At the beginning of the 18th century the Habsburg empire took over, and after the First World War, Hungary ceded the region to Romania.

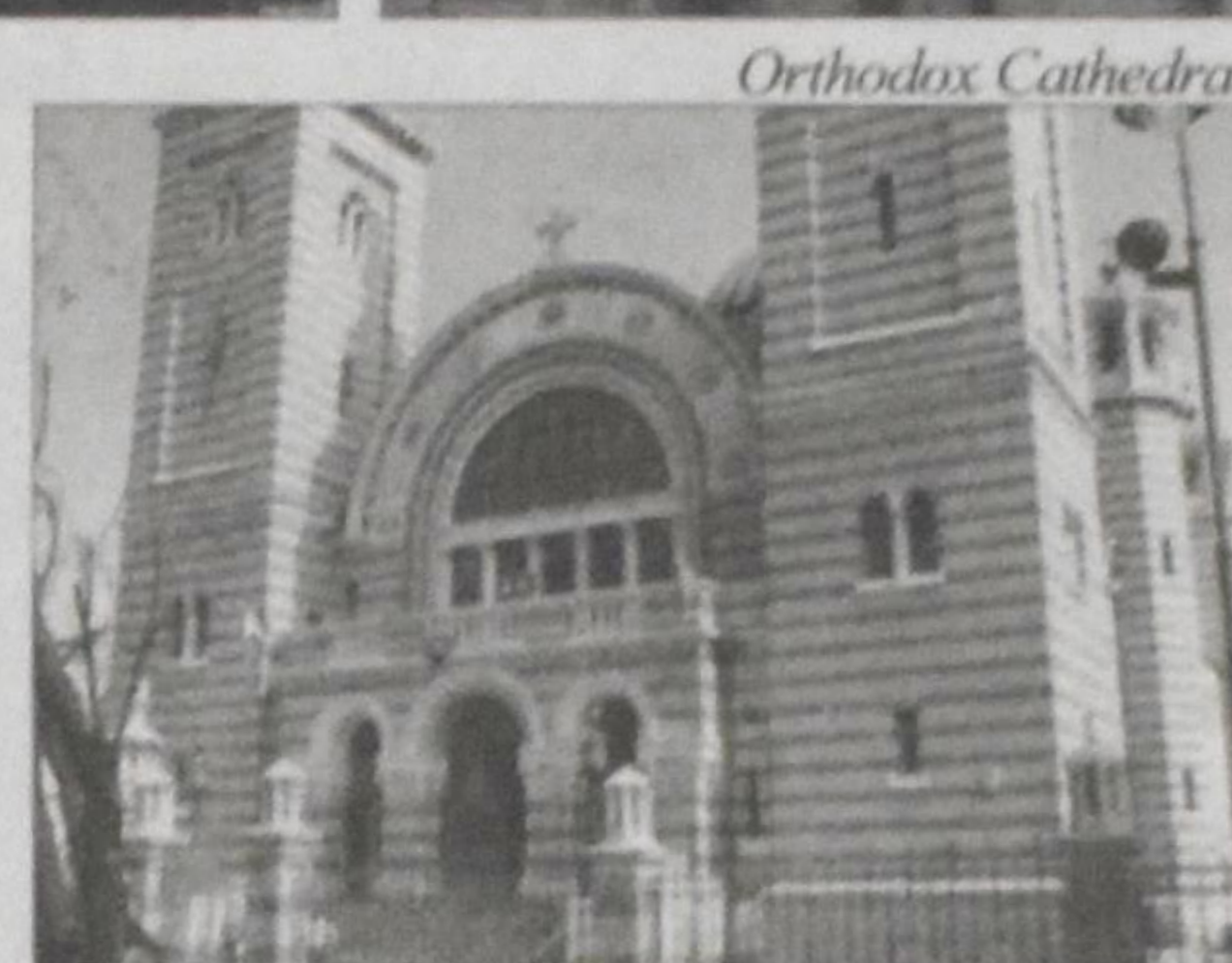
As Klein notes in his new book, the present-day religious, linguistic and ethnic make-up of the city reflects these successive changes of sovereignty. "The Orthodox and the Greek Catholics (united with Rome) pray in Romanian, the Lutherans in German, and the Reformed and Unitarians in Hungarian," he writes. "The Roman Catholic Church has services in all three languages. Sermons



Evangelical Cathedral



Catholic church



Orthodox Cathedral

in the Free Churches are in Romanian and occasionally still in German. And recently Roma people have begun services in their own language."

The Habsburgs promoted the Roman Catholic Church and tried to persuade Romanian Orthodox clergymen in Transylvania to join the Greek (Byzantine Rite) Catholic Church in union with Rome. And after the Habsburg's Edict of Tolerance of 1781, the first Hungarian Reformed church, whose members were principally Hungarians, was built within Sibiu's city walls.

The edict also allowed Orthodox Romanians to build places of worship, and by the end of the 18th century a small Orthodox church stood on the site of the present-day cathedral.

"The word 'plurality' has now become a slogan, but here, though called by different names, it has been an everyday reality taken for granted for centuries, supported by tolerance. Though encumbered by tensions, these have seldom led to enmity and never to military conflict," writes Klein.

For many years, however, the city's religious communities, though coexisting peacefully, remained largely separate from each other. Recently, that has begun to change, writes Klein. Although interdenominational dialogue was not always easy during the period of communist rule after the Second World War, it has borne fruit that can be seen today. He says, "The various churches, while maintaining their own confessional, ethnic and linguistic identities, accept the others and in this way are able to open up for dialogue and for taking steps together to promote Christian unity."

In 2007, Sibiu has been proclaimed a European Capital of Culture, and Klein believes the city's history has a message of tolerance that can help coexistence in Europe. "It can serve as a model," Klein explained. "We don't have to lump everything together, but can coexist alongside each other with our different traditions, languages and confessions."

Nature



Hawk watching

When I tell people that I raise pigeons partly for the thrill of watching the goshawks chase and kill them they look at me as if I had just flaunted a Taliban membership card.

Reason, or omeriness, requires me to point out that these tenderer-than-thou petal-people are not supporting the Krill Preservation Society or flocking to see *Never Cry Mosquito*. Nor do I wish to bear false witness against any New Yorker who loves to see the "flying rats" that plague his parks and apartment ledges killed by any means, fair or foul (pun intended).



In fact, I don't want to talk about feathered falcons, hawks, or raptors of any kind. I wish to speak about wasps.

Wasps are misunderstood creatures. You may think of them as related to bees, and I guess both are insects. But bees are to wasps what cows are to wolves. One is a herbivore; the other a carnivore.

And it is the carnivorous wasp that fascinates me. Specifically, it is the mostly-black solitary hunting-wasp of barn, house, and lawn that interests me. Although they are sometimes called "bald-faced hornets", they are really wasps.

These critters pack a wallop. You can hear them *bap, snap* against your window on late summer days. How they survive this self-imposed bashing is beyond me. I do know why they do it, however: they are making attacks on other insects resting on the pane.

They *bap* and *snap* when they sting you, too. Once I had finished saying good-bye to a little girl we had cared for one weekend, and was doing the "one more wave" to Chelsey as her mom drove out of the driveway. Just then, a black wasp somehow got behind my glasses and *bap-snapped* me. Suddenly, there I was waving my arms in my face and jumping around (and probably making some comments, too!). Chelsey and her mom couldn't figure out the meaning of my strange dance, so they stopped the car and asked, "Yes?" I waved them on so I could suffer and mutter in peace. I learned something: even if you are not allergic, these critters really can make you swell up.

Wasps also "hunt the siding" on the south or west sides of your house. *Bap, snap!* Houseflies scatter, but for only a few moments. The wasp loops around and patrols again, looking for a target. (I suspect that wasps have limited distance vision, although they may have compound eyes.) They zoom – closer, farther, around again – and then zero in. Watching a wasp make a kill is probably as rare an event as

watching a hawk catch one of my pigeons or seeing one of Hamilton, Ontario's peregrine falcons stoop and catch a starling.

But it does happen. After all, the wasps survive. Just the other day, I saw a wasp hit a grasshopper but both disappeared into long grass and I wasn't about to interfere with wasp-dinner. (My eye remembered.)

Depending on where you live, wasp-watching may be just the thing for you to do this weekend. Late summer or early fall "dog days" are just the right time. Your dog can help you. Dogs seem to be especially irritated by the these black terrors. They snap at them and then – if successful in catching one – spit it out with smackings like those Grandpa's dentures make when masticating tough pot roast. Then Rover gingerly graps, steps on, mouths, spits, and repeats the process until the wasp escapes or is gobbed to death.



Bald-faced hornet and nest

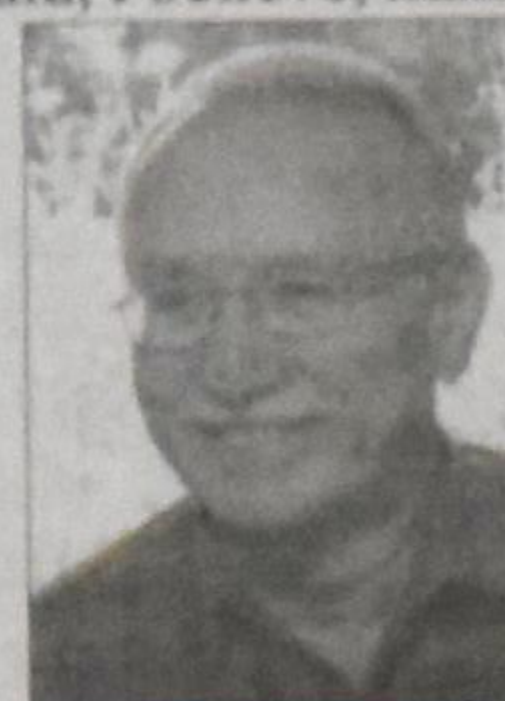


As you can probably tell, I'm fascinated by wasps, one of those things that God made "after its kind." I hope you don't live in an environment so sterilized by pollutants and neat living and chemical sprays that you aren't able to regularly watch wasps.

Wasp and bee allergies are potentially fatal; stings on the eyelid no fun at all.

But still... wasps in the yard probably pose much less of a threat than wild drivers, home invaders, or breathing Toronto's air. And you can't say that God made *those* threats. But he did, I believe, make wasps. Ours is but to appreciate them with eyes open in wonder, carefully.

Curt Gesch is a neo-Luddite, neo-Calvinist, and – as far as he can tell – a neo-natal human being. His telephone number is (250) 846-9511.



Faith's role on the rise in US elections for 2008

A new Pew poll on religion and politics finds that 70 percent of Americans want a president with strong religious beliefs.



Jane Lampman

For people who've tuned into this year's presidential debates, it's clear the candidates aren't hesitant to talk religion. Apparently, that makes a lot of sense.

Most Americans (almost 70 percent) say they want a president with strong religious beliefs, and they are comfortable with the discussion of faith in the election campaign. In fact, 38 percent say there's "too little" discussion of religion, according to the latest Pew poll on religion and politics.

"It's an interesting election cycle in that we have this high level of discussion on faith and values in both political parties ... [and] 38 percent still want more," says John Green, senior fellow at the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life in Washington.

The role religion will play in voters' political choices, however, remains far from clear. Paradoxically, the front runners in both parties – Rudy Giuliani and Hillary Clinton – are currently perceived as the least religious among the candidates.

Hot-button social issues of concern to religious activists are taking a back seat to Iraq and domestic issues, even among Evangelicals. Seventy-eight percent of Americans cite domestic issues (such as the economy, healthcare, and the environment) and 72 percent cite Iraq as very important in their decisions, while 38 percent cite social issues such as abortion and gay marriage.

Among Evangelicals, 72 percent highlight domestic issues; 66 percent, Iraq; and 56 percent, social issues.

For Evangelicals – especially the younger generation – the agenda is changing, and in ways that are likely to affect politics, according to the Rev. Jim Wallis, who heads Sojourners, a progressive evangelical ministry. Reverend Wallis, the author of "God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It," says he's spending lots of time on Christian college campuses, where he's debating the "moral issues of 2008" with leaders of the religious right.

"Evangelicals still care about

the sanctity of human life, but they also care deeply about poverty, climate change, HIV/AIDS, Darfur, the war in Iraq," he says. "Whoever addresses those issues from a moral perspective will be attractive to Evangelicals. Their votes are really in play."

Candidates in both parties are making a pitch on faith and values, but particularly Democrats. Since 2004, they've been working to erase an image of being inhospitable to religion with an outreach effort by state parties and on the campaign trail. Barack Obama, for instance, who captured national attention a year ago with a speech on religion in politics, is holding "faith forums" in Iowa and New Hampshire.

"This time the top three Democrats happen to be articulate about their faith," Wallis says. "And they're connecting values with policies."

Democrats show more of their faith

The Pew poll suggests they've made modest gains so far. The percentage of Americans who see the Democratic party as friendly to religion has risen by 4 percent over the past year, and the percentage who see nonreligious liberals as having too much power in the party dropped from 44 to 37 percent since 2005.

"These are modest but significant indications that the effort by Democratic leaders to change their image is bearing some fruit," says Dr. Green, an expert on US politics and religion.

"Many independents two years ago saw the Democrats as a party where secularists had too much influence," he adds. "The fact that perception is declining could make it easier for independents to vote for Democratic candidates."

Forty-three percent of Americans say that religious conservatives have too much control over the Republican party.

Interestingly, the survey reveals that even people who are not themselves observant see re-

Humour

Heidelberg cats

Harry der Nederlanden

We have two cats – an Old Testament cat and a New Testament cat. The O.T. cat, a tabby called Rospie, keeps bringing sacrifices, bloody sacrifices. He drops them right in front of the sliding doors onto the deck. It's the one place we will be sure to see them in the morning. The sacrifices are usually mice, but he catches the occasional bird as well. He never eats the poor creatures, so clearly it's not for himself that he catches and kills them. He's doing it for higher purposes. For us. Sacrifices in the O.T. style.

I've tried telling him that the era of sacrifices is over. But when I'm reading the newspaper, I often catch him perusing the other side. He's noticed that humans are still quite busy sacrificing one another.

The other, a big black she-cat called Inky – only catches mice – alive. Then she brings them into the house and lets them go. It triggers an instant pentecostal explosion – new life, speaking in tongues, raising of hands, jumping up and down, hysterical laughter,

running around, falling down on hands and knees and so on. Meanwhile, Inky calmly sits back on her plump haunches to observe. She's clearly entertained by the spectacle, but I don't think she does it only to amuse herself.

She's noticed us settling into routine, becoming complacent and lethargic in our life sub specie aeternitas. And she figures we need an infusion of new life.

There's also something in it of a critique of our modern way of life, I'm sure. For years she was a strictly indoor cat, fearful of venturing outside. Sometimes she'd take a few tentative steps out onto the deck, but anything – a fluttering leaf or a gust of wind – would send her scurrying back indoors.

But a couple of years ago she underwent a conversion. One sunny day, creeping along the wall of the garage, she made it all the way to the garden at the rear of



our yard – a dense jungle of flowers, some five feet tall, bunched grasses, raspberry bushes, tomato plants, bean bushes, peppers, onions, corn and stuff I can't identify. I've been told they're weeds, but they're too pretty to pull out. Inky discovered our jungle garden – and its wildlife. Along one edge of the garden are three compost bins that attract not just worms but also mice. I think it was her encounter with mice that triggered her conversion. She discovered the Wild Other and that awakened deep within her catsoul something fierce and feral.

Since then she's become something of a critic of western civilization and of the way we've



insulated ourselves from wild nature. Bringing live game into the house is her way of bridging the divide, subverting the dualism. Like most critics, however, she's a bit of a hypocrite, for she spends much of her time stretched out on the carpet in a spot of sun. She does do it in a rather uncivilized manner – on her back, belly-up, with her legs splayed out. It looks quite indecent. Cats are supposed to sleep curled up in a ball, the picture of closure.

The other cat, the red one, never sleeps with his belly exposed like that. Of course, that's understandable in terms of male vanity. Like many neutered tomcats, he has developed a rather flabby, even floppy, belly. No wonder he wants to hide it. I'd sleep all day curled up in a ball too if I had a belly like that.

overly protected way of life. Those who don't hunt at night without weapons and don't know what it means to kill with our bare hands are lesser creatures in their eyes. That doesn't strike me as a very biblical attitude.

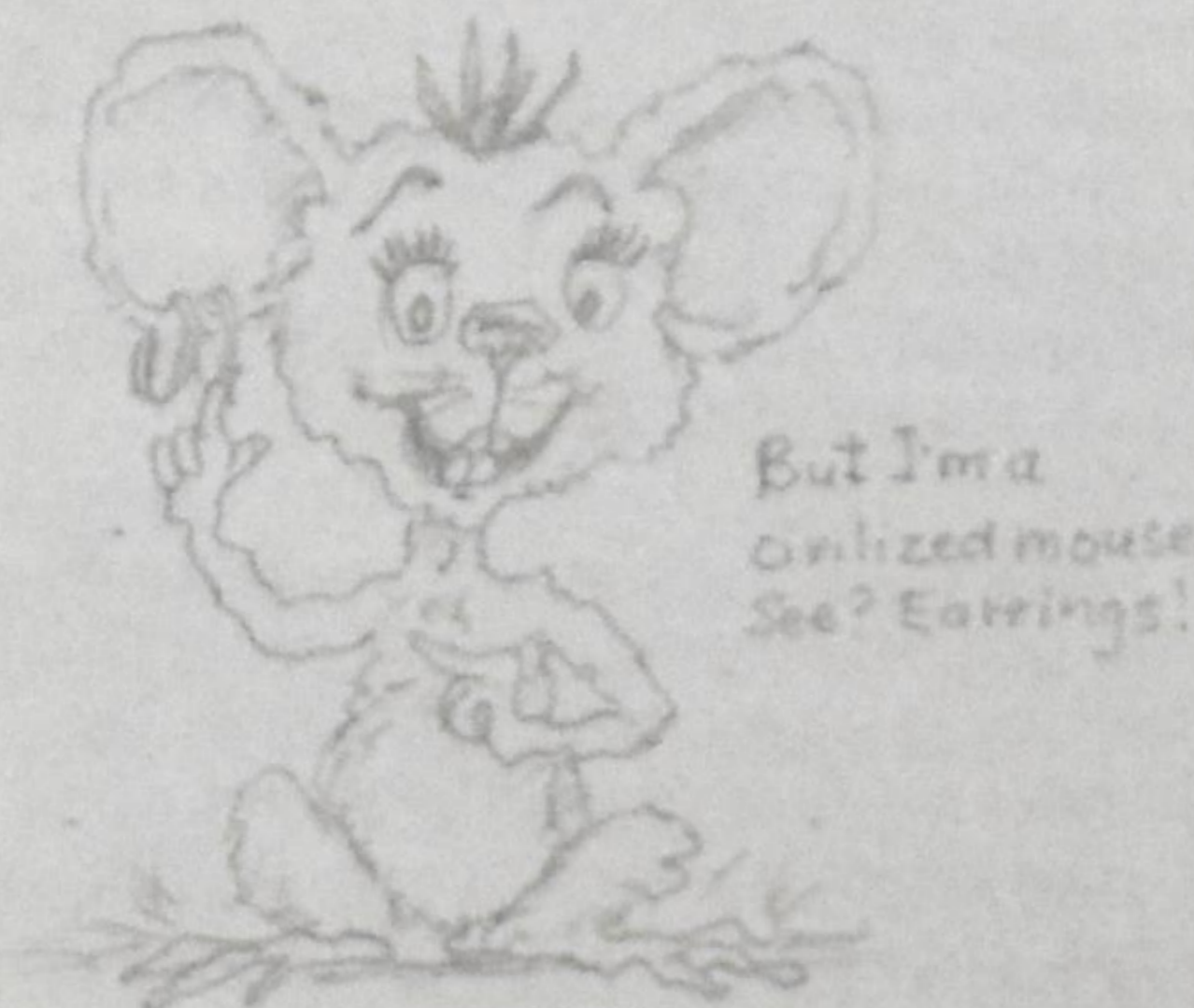
They remind me of the general played by Jack Nicholson in "A Few Good Men" who shouts at Tom Cruise and the rest of us softies: "You can't stand the truth!" The truth is that for protection us soft, kind, civilized types depend on hard, disciplined killers – like cats.

Last year, however, they both learned a hard lesson. They were subjected to a vicious attack by a vast army of fleas. The tiny parasites nearly drove them crazy. They were biting, licking, scratching and rolling around in a frenzy till we treated them with flea killer. That showed them we too could kill when the chips are down and when push comes to shove and when our backs are to the wall and our feet to the fire. In fact, we killed on a grand scale, like Saddam Hussein – just to make life bearable for the cats. Of course, I ended up with a few flea bites myself.

Rospie and Inky learned something in the process, I think. They became aware of their frailty, their misery and their dependence. After experiencing all that misery they graduated to the next stage – gratitude. You could see it in their eyes: pride was replaced with humility. Now, whenever they bring their sacrifices to the door, I'm sure it's done out of gratitude, not to demean us.

Now they are Heidelberg Cats. First Question and Answer from the Heidelberg Catechism: Q: Whence do you know your sin and misery?

A: From fleas.



Continued from p. 10

ligious commitment as an asset in a candidate.

Of those surveyed, only 16 percent perceive Senator Clinton as "very religious," compared to 28 percent for John Edwards and 24 percent for Senator Obama. But large majorities see all three as "somewhat religious."

Mitt Romney far outpaced other Republicans, with 46 percent of Americans viewing him as "very religious." He even bested President Bush (43 percent). Yet Mr. Romney faces concerns about Mormonism. One-quarter of Americans say they are reluctant to vote for a Mormon.

Fourteen percent of those surveyed see Mayor Giuliani as "very religious," with Fred Thompson at 16 percent and John McCain at 19 percent. Large majorities see them as "somewhat religious."

The question is whether a GOP candidate can capture the imagination of conservative Evangelicals who have served as a strong base for the party in the past.

"At this point in the campaign season, religious talk is grabbing more attention than how those beliefs will intersect with their individual policy positions," says Tony Perkins, president of the conservative Family Research Council



Obama in church

in Washington. "Even in this poll, it's evident people haven't drilled down to that yet."

He points to the finding that just 22 percent of the public, and less than one-third of Republicans, are aware of front-runner Giuliani's abortion-rights position.

"As we get closer to the election, people will look to see if the religious talk matches with policy positions consistent with people of faith," he adds. "When the dust settles from the Republican primary, if you have someone who doesn't hold their view on abortion, then Christians won't get involved – they'll vote, but they won't be out there working or stirring up

others to vote."

Church and state still a strong divide

Although the poll shows an ambiguous impact, Green suggests faith will continue to be a prominent element on the hustings.

"That religion is sometimes important, sometimes less so, helping some candidates and hurting others, is likely to reinforce the desire of the candidates and party leaders to make effective religious appeals," he says. "I think this will be a standard part of the campaign, certainly through the primaries and probably the election."

Despite the thumbs up Americans give to the faith-and-values discussion in Campaign 08, the survey highlights one taboo: Nearly two-thirds of Americans (including a majority of conservative Republicans) are opposed to houses of worship endorsing political candidates.

The nationwide survey of 3,002 adults was carried out in August by the Pew Forum and the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.

Jane Lampman is a staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Worship

May we please see the Story behind the text?

From the book, *Preacher, Can You Hear Us Listening?* by Roger E. Van Harn (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI)

"Once upon a time ..."

The words are like a spotlight that lights the stage before there are actors on it. They create expectation. They prepare us for a story and draw us into it.

Every sermon needs the spirit if not the letters of those words. Sermons are spoken from Bible texts, and God's Story lives behind those texts to infuse them with meaning and purpose.

We listen to sermons to see the Story. Our ears and eyes work together when we listen. When we have heard the goodnews Story in a sermon, we can say, "I see! I see!"

Martin Luther warned that those who were not satisfied with hearing and wanted to see with their eyes were lost. For him, faith was a matter of hearing. But for those who wanted to see, Luther had this advice: "Stick your eyes in your ears!" Luther would agree that when we listen to a sermon, we need to see the Story behind the text.

This does not mean that when we listen to sermons we should expect to hear a string of stories – although sometimes we could do worse. It means that when we listen to a sermon we should be able to see the Story of what God has done for us in the history of Israel and in the person of Jesus Christ. Bible texts live in the Story that gave them birth, life, meaning, and purpose. When we listen to sermons, we should be able to see the drama, the good-news Story of what God has done for us. That Story lives behind the Bible texts, sometimes more visibly than others. If that Story shines in and through the text, it will also be visible in and through the sermon itself, and then in and through the lives of those who listen. The Story that gives meaning and purpose to the text gives meaning and purpose to the sermon and to the listeners who are drawn into it.

In a Christian doctrine class I frequently teach for inquirers into the faith of the church, I sometimes say, "I believe the Gospel and I preach the Gospel. What is the Gospel?" Then I watch the question work its way in and among the class members. They are thrown into a healthy state of confusion. Responses compete for prestige and piety: love, the Bible, the Word of God, the fact that there is a God, what we believe, how to be saved, the teachings of Jesus, what God wants us to do. After we have groped our way through our responses, someone timidly asks it as a question: The story?

Yes, the Story. The Story with a capital S. The Gospel is the good-news Story of what God has done for us in the history of Israel and in the person of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is not a grand idea, a lofty ideal, a bit of good advice, a golden rule, or a worthy object. The Gospel is news that can be announced, proclaimed, published, and heard. When we listen to sermons, we need to see

the Story that lives behind, in, and through the text.

We can hear it in the ancient creed that throbs with the Story: "... and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he arose" These words do not speak of good ideas or advice; they testify about persons and events in a Story.

People who have been taught by the Heidelberg Catechism are told about the Story. The teacher asks where we get this faith in Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and humankind. The student answers, "From the holy gospel, which God himself first revealed in Paradise; afterward published by the holy patriarchs and prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly fulfilled by his only begotten Son" (Answer 19). That is the language of story: "first revealed, ... afterward published, ... foreshadowed, ... and lastly fulfilled."

When we listen to sermons, we can expect to see the Story that is entitled "The Gospel of Jesus Christ."

The Story is named for its center in the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He, according to the Story, is the one God put forth to make peace between us and among us. Because of him, we can know that God is for us in spite of all else that we see and hear.

The Story reaches back to the beginning and forward to the new beginning. This Jesus is the fulfillment of all that came before him and is the promise of all that came after him. According to Sidney Greidanus, "Scripture teaches one universal kingdom history that encompasses all of created reality: past, present, and future." If that is true, then "every biblical passage must be understood in the context of this grand sweep of kingdom history."² If that is true, the Story should show through the text when we listen to sermons.

William D. Thompson calls for perspective in speaking and listening to sermons:

The Bible is a witness to the saving activity of God in Jesus Christ, the meaning of whose life, death, and resurrection controls the meaning of every passage.

How many messages can be preached from the Bible?

What a silly question! On the surface of it, the answer is clear and obvious – hundreds, thousands, lifetimes. Perhaps. To look at the question another way, the answer is one – only one.³

The Story is behind the text and yet not only behind it; it also lives in and through the text. But it is important to recognize that it is behind the text, for this points us

to the fact that it is the Story that gave birth and life to the text. God's people of the Old and New Testaments had the Story before they had the book. When we hear sermons from Bible texts that rip the text loose from the Story and treat it as though it gets its meaning from our recent history, our faith is diminished, and we are misled.

Once upon a time I walked into an insurance office. The customer-service counter offered me an array of business brochures and religious tracts while I waited. Looking them over, I thought I saw a tract that had fallen into the business section by mistake. On closer examination, it turned out to be an insurance brochure with a Bible text printed on it: "The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock" (Matt. 7:25). Opening it, I was urged by the information to own a certain kind of insurance protection so that if flood or wind came, my fortunes would not fall. When I saw the salesperson, I asked him if he saw how the brochure abused the Bible text. He said something like, "Well, yes, I suppose so. But this is a business, you know, not a church."

Business or church, I wondered how many sermons (including my own) detached the text from the Story so that it could serve alien purposes.

The sermon should help us see the Story that gave birth, life, meaning, and purpose to the text. "Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come" (Eccles. 12:1) is not a bit of folk wisdom spoken by a midwestern farmer last year to restrain a teenage son. It is the voice of a wise man in Israel who, unable to make sense out of life and fresh out of answers, bets his life on the rule and goodness of God anyway, trusting that God will vindicate his faith. Saint Paul's instruction in First Corinthians 16:1 concerning the collection for the saints is not the appeal of a slick fund-raiser. It is the request of the Apostle Paul, who, having brought the good-news Story from Jew to Gentile, now wants to carry gifts from the Gentiles to the Jerusalem poor, thus displaying the power of the new family of God in Christ.

If the Story of what God has done for us in the history of Israel and in the person of Jesus Christ lies behind the Bible text, preachers can help us see that story when we listen to sermons.

But that is where our problem with some Bible texts lies. Some texts seem to obscure the Story, or worse, tell an alien story. Bible texts – and sermons preached from them – do not all provide an equally transparent window on the Story. When we read Luke 2:14, the Story is right there, breathtaking and brilliant: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" But what do we make of Jesus' words in that same Gospel: "Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth?"

No, I tell you, but rather division!" (12:51). Help! What happened to the Story?

We have no trouble seeing the Story in the great Advent lesson: "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD'S hand double for all her sins" (Isa. 40:1-2). But what do we hear or see in these words just eleven chapters earlier: "Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor, blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not from wine; stagger, but not from strong drink! For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep; he has closed your eyes, you prophets, and covered your heads, you seers" (Isa. 29:9-10).

We see the Story quite clearly in these words of Jesus in Matthew: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). But can we see anything through his words just four chapters later: "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather" (24:28)?

Perhaps the Epistles will be consistently clear, letting us see the Story through every page. Let's try First Timothy: "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1:15-17). Those words should be sung! But what happens to the Story two verses later: "By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith; among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, so that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1:19-20). Who? What? Does Satan teach virtue? The Story seems eclipsed.

Some texts are transparent enough. When we hear sermons preached from them, the very least we want from the preacher is not to spoil them. Other texts seem to obscure the Story. When they are read, we call for help.

While I am writing these words, I am sitting at a desk next to a very large window overlooking a beautiful lake in Michigan. It is a grand September day, and squeals of joy and laughter are coming from the lake. Twenty canoes are plying back and forth, paddled by teenagers who are having the time of their lives. There is more to their story than I can see, but what I see in their play and laughter is a kind of doxology to the coming kingdom.

There is one slight problem. The window is smudged in places. The smudges call attention to themselves and get in the way of seeing the story on the lake. I need to clean the window so that it will not get in the way of my seeing the story out there.

Service

When we sit in a pew and listen to Bible texts being read, it's like looking through a smudged window. We can see the Story, and it is breathtaking. But there are smudges that call attention to the text itself and get in the way of seeing the Story. As those who listen to sermons, we need preachers to clean the window so that we can see more clearly and fully. What we see of the Story excites us to want more. Perhaps we could even see the Story through Jesus' words about bringing division, not peace, or his talk about vultures gathering around a corpse – if only someone would help clean the window.

When we see the Story behind the text for the sermon, we make a discovery. The Story is not way back there – behind the ancient text. The Story is now. The Story behind the text is the Story that shines through the sermon here. The sermon is preached in Christian worship on a certain Sunday of the church year that has all the great events written all over it: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost. Seeing the Story now makes it fresh and immediate. The Story we see behind the text is the Story we celebrate behind the sermon, in and through worship here and now.

Text, sermon, listeners – all become part of the Story when it is seen and celebrated. Because we see the Story through sermon and text as being present here and now, we worship. We bring our praise, we confess our sins, we receive forgiveness, we pray for our neighbors and world, we give gifts, we bring new members to baptism, and we eat and drink as signs of the new community and the coming kingdom. We see the Story not as spectators at a distance but as players in the cast. The more clearly we can see the Story, the more we know it is ours; the more we know it is ours, the more clearly we see it.

Sermons, like Bible texts, can conceal as well as reveal. Sermons are also smudged windows. But when we listen to sermons to see the Story, we can do a little window-cleaning ourselves. We can hold on to this part, clinging for dear life, let that part go, rearrange these words so we can hear and see better, correct that, celebrate this. Listening can keep us busy if we want to see the Story.

When we see and celebrate the Story of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, we cannot be the same. Something has happened to us. Elizabeth Achtemeier has seen what happens:

In short, the biblical story becomes our story through our recall of it.... As God worked in and through Israel and Jesus Christ, so he uses the story of them to work the same way in our lives. What Israel was – the people accompanied by God – the Christian Church becomes, through the story. What Jesus Christ did – reconcile the world to God – his story continues to do for us, and indeed for all generations of Christians who will ever come after.⁴

And David Buttrick offers a similar insight:

Like an untold adopted child suddenly told, you discovered a different identity by being given a new beginning. So, at minimum, preaching alters identity by prefacing all our stories and setting them in a larger story that stretches back to the dawn of God's creation.⁵

We cannot see and celebrate God's Story and remain unchanged. All the identities of age, gender, race, and class that function as barriers and weapons in a broken world are changed. They become gifts for serving because God's Story has given us a new identity. We are members of his family on the way between creation and new creation. We are the people whose original address was Eden, who grieved our God with our rebellion, and whom God in the freedom of his grace calls his children anyway. We are the

Take a page from the book of Acts

Angela Bick

A few months ago, our second daughter was baptized. She wore a little gown made of pure silk, and – like so many baptism gowns – this one comes with a story. The silk was once part of a parachute. The parachute belonged to an Allied airman. In 1944, this pilot was shot down over Holland, but the parachute brought him safely to the ground. A Dutch police officer named Harm found the abandoned parachute and realized it could alert the Germans to the presence of an enemy. To help the pilot escape, Harm stuffed the parachute under his long winter coat and took it home. Rather than being angry at the danger he'd put them in, Catharina, his pregnant wife, was delighted with the parachute. Her sister Clara began sewing immediately. It had, after all, been a long time since the two women had seen any new material.

The next spring, when Harm's firstborn son arrived, he was baptized in a long gown and a warm cape made from the silk lining of the Allied airman's parachute. Catharina and Clara wore matching silk blouses. After the war, two more sons took their turns wearing the baptism gown. Eventually, Harm and his family moved to Canada. Their sons grew up, got married, and had sons of their own: seven grandchildren in total – all boys. Finally, by the third generation, the genders began to balance out. Our two daughters were the first girls to wear the baptism gown, over sixty years after their great-grandfather Harm protected an Allied airman by smuggling his parachute home.

I love the history in that little silk dress, and I've always been interested in stories about the war. But even after a lifetime of reading novels and seeing movies about World War II, it's hard for me to imagine how Harm, my husband's grandfather, really felt when he decided to defy the Germans. Without simplifying or sensationalizing his actions, one thing is clear: he went against what he was supposed to do.

A little voice in my head can't help but wonder whether I would have done that. Our culture has lots of suggestions for what I'm supposed to do today: own a house, maybe a few cars, work hard to buy stuff to fill up that house. Am I going against any of that? Do my actions distinguish me from the next guy?

As September begins, all sorts of church groups and committees are resuming. At our church, the Bible study groups that stopped meeting in May are about to form again. If you're a new Christian, programs like Alpha are a great way to get to know the Bible. If you're new to a community or to a church, study groups can help you meet people. But groups of friends who've grown up in the church don't need another excuse to serve coffee and goodies to each other while working through study guides meant for new Christians. What if, instead of starting

people who were brought down to bondage in Egypt, who were set free by God's outstretched arm, who settled in the promised land, who were escorted against our will to Babylon as exiles, who were released by an idol-worshiping servant of our God. We are the people Christ was born for, died for, lives again for. We are called the people of God not because of our wisdom or virtue or power, but because God freely decided to be with us and for us. *That* Story gives us our identity.

With the identity comes our purpose. We are in God's world as God's people for God's purpose. From Abraham to David, through Christ to Paul, God's purpose was to

another Bible study group, we start a Bible acts group? Instead of meeting in the safety of each other's living rooms, we'll meet at McDonald's, the one on the grittier side of town. I can buy a stranger some coffee and you can listen to a taxi-driver's life story. Maybe next month we can meet at the homeless shelter. Did the climate of World War II somehow inspire more heroic acts than today's society? I hope not. I want to do something, now, that will become a story as interesting as the baptism gown made from a parachute. I think it's time to act.

After all, we define ourselves by our actions. The first question you ask a stranger or an old friend is not "What do you believe?"; rather, it's "What do you do?" Last week, I tried to take a page from the book of Acts by enacting my faith in one small way. My neighbour – someone I've exchanged pleasantries with but not much else – was astonished when I handed her a loaf of coffee-flavored banana bread, still steaming slightly from the oven. "For me?" she kept saying, incredulous. "For what?" Food is a wonderful way to bring people together, as our church communities know very well. Adding supper to the Alpha program, for example, has proven quite effective at bringing people into church. That's why I'd like to make this column a space for sharing recipes (among other things), in the hopes that your taste buds will become interested, your hands engaged, and your feet active with the task of sharing food with a stranger. It may be a small gesture, but it's a good beginning.

Coffee-flavoured Banana Bread

- 1 ½ cups butter or margarine, softened
- 1 ¾ cups (packed) brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 3 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. grated orange rind
- 4 cups flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 3 Tbsp. cocoa
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 cups pureed ripe banana soaked in 1 cup strong black coffee

- 1) Preheat oven to 350. Generously grease 2 loaf pans.
- 2) Beat butter and sugar together. Add eggs, one at a time. Stir in vanilla and orange rind.
- 3) Sift the dry ingredients together. Add this to the butter mixture alternately with the bananas. Mix just enough after each addition to combine – don't overmix.
- 4) Bake 40 to 55 minutes. Let the pans cool for at least one hour before slicing.

bring the blessing of his grace to all the nations and to all of life. Now that we have seen the story, we recognize that we are here "on purpose." We are witnesses of the Story and channels of its gifts.

Since our Story is centered in the cross of Jesus Christ, we are sustained by hope. The worst thing that could happen in the world has already happened – the crucifixion – and we call that day Good Friday. In the midst of that darkness God reconciled the world to himself. His resurrection is the assurance that his promise will prevail to make all things new.

See Story on page 15

Eating
my
words

Angela Bick

Ecclesiastes

What good are books

The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd.

Ecclesiastes 12:11

A. A. van Ruler

For the oxen pulling the plow, getting pricked by the sharp point of an oxgoad is hardly a pleasant experience. But the plowman must do it to keep the animals going and exerting themselves to pull the plow through the soil. Sometimes it seems as if nothing in this world would get done without the use of a certain amount of force.

Here the goad is only a metaphor. The words of the wise are like such goads. The wise use them to spur people on. But they are painful. This is especially true in Ecclesiastes. In a certain sense, it is a painful book. It doesn't pull punches. It tells it like it is. It points out numerous follies, injustices and irrationalities in human deeds and destinies. It offers little comfort. The knowledge that it gives is the knowledge of human misery rather than the knowledge of redemption. We begin to see what kind of mad world we live in and how strange human life in this world really is.

But this is useful. It is painful, but the pain is beneficial. The oxen are driven on by the prick of the oxgoad. Similarly, we are startled into alertness by the words of the wise. Most people plod along from birth to death. They drowse their lives away. That takes all the excitement and vitality out of human life. To guard against sleepwalking through life, it's good to say loudly and precisely how things are.

Then people are shocked into wakefulness. They rub their eyes, and they begin to become aware of their situation. They begin to reflect on the way things are. As a result, they cannot help but begin looking for the right way. Their bodies become energized to pull the plow of human existence through the field of being. Best of all, the furrows they plow are straight as an arrow.

This is what it is all about—in our human existence we plow created reality from one end to another. To do so we must penetrate to a certain depth and make ourselves aware of what it means to be here. We must penetrate to a certain level of justice and righteousness. We may be living badly. Then we are spoiling everything that is good and beautiful in God's creation. But we can choose to live right, and then we will display the goodness and beauty of God's own being and of his creation in our own existence.

But we must be prodded and shocked awake to do so. What is needed is the painfulness of wisdom and the sharp point of the words of the wise. They really are like goads that drive human beings forward, so we must learn to put up with them.

Seen aright, we ought to be thankful for them. The law and the gospel are painful matters. They continually call us to conversion. To come to faith and to live and to die by that faith is not a pleasant walk in the park. But it is the only way we can live rightly. So we must be thankful for all the unpleasantness of those words from the wise.

These things are also stated in terms of another metaphor. The collected words of the wise are like firmly embedded nails. In those days a good carpenter would first drill a hole in the wall. Then he'd



pound a wooden plug into the hole, and then a nail into the plug. That would keep the nail firmly in place. Or we might think of erecting a tent. First all the spikes have to be driven firmly into the ground so that they will not move. If we fail to do that, the tent will surely collapse in the first breeze.

This is what the collected words of the wise are like. They are not only spoken, for a spoken word is fleeting. It goes in one ear and out the other. But they are also written down. This gives them greater permanence. When they are collected in this way and bound together, they form a book—a book filled with the words of the wise.

Then they become hard to overlook. Such books remain in circulation for ages. In this way the words of the wise are imprinted and hammered into the consciousness of humanity. Every new generation once again drinks them in along with their mother's milk. They shape the inner as well as the outer life. Our imaginations are populated by certain images, our emotions are infused with certain feelings, our thinking receives its fundamental structure, and our will accepts a firm set of goals. Even our language is affected by it, taking on certain typical expressions and ways of speaking. For us it was the Bible not the Edda that shaped our minds.

This is the great value of books. The discovery of writing and later of the printing press are gifts for which we ought to be very thankful. And therefore, too, reading is a useful activity. Not everyone feels the same need to read nor does everyone derive the same pleasure from it. Some are almost exclusively oriented to oral communication. But all true wisdom that is passed from mouth to mouth originates from what has been written down and read.

Fortunately there are always great masses of people who love to read. The Preacher tells them that above all they should read the collections of sayings by the wise. They are like firmly embedded nails. They en-

able you to achieve a stability over toward the right in your inner life. They give you something to live by and to die by. You need wisdom, and it can be found in these collections.

Then the Preacher adds a remarkable clause: "given by one Shepherd." At the very least, this tells us that there is something pastoral in the sayings of the wise and their collections. The shepherd cares for his flock. He leads his sheep and tends them. Thus, they get to their destination so they do not get lost. And he sees that they are fed.

But does that little word "one" mean something more? Doesn't it point to the one great Shepherd, namely, God? Isn't he the source of all wisdom among mankind and in the world?

And isn't it a miracle of grace that he allows this wisdom to seep into the life of the world? We have not been completely abandoned to the self-destructive folly of the devil. Things are not just strange and mad and absurd. There is also truth. And this truth is knowable. True knowledge of the truth is wisdom.

This comes from God. He is the great Shepherd. He leads us, tends us, his flock. On our end, we often are surprisingly stupid and stubborn sheep. But the Shepherd doesn't give up. He keeps his flock together. He leads them into green pastures and beside still waters. He leads and feeds them with wisdom, which he supplies in abundance.

Christian living

Every hair on your head is numbered

Daphne Simpkins

It bothered Mildred Budge that the governor's wife did not comb the back of her hair properly.

Every time the woman came on TV, the camera caught the First Lady from the back, and her teased brown hair looked like a tumbleweed.

Maybe the style was intentional. Messy hair seemed to be the norm, now. Maybe messy hair wasn't really messy if it was considered a proper hairstyle.

Mildred sighed, sending the question to that place in her brain where she stored recurrent ruminations that preoccupied her when insomnia hit – or maybe caused it.

Today she had a different question to answer. The retired school teacher was determined to sit outside and practice the Presence of God, a spiritual discipline that cropped up periodically in her quiet-time reading.

The writer she was currently reading made a distinction about how to practice God's Presence: Meditation was a focus; contemplation was being open to whatever came.

As Miss Budge settled onto the blue chaise lounge on her back porch, she decided that she was going to contemplate – and almost immediately she remembered the governor's wife's messy hair. Her hand involuntarily reached for an imagined comb, and found the metal arms of the chaise lounge. The hot metal reminded Miss Budge where she was. She resolved to focus, and recited the writer's suggested first step in learning to contemplate.

1. Collect your desire for God.

Understanding desire had always been hard for the aging spinster.

Mildred stroked the back of her head thoughtfully. Something felt wrong. Her hair felt thin back there. Instantly, Mildred remembered how her hairdresser had gently and without any discussion begun separating a significant portion of Miss Budge's bangs to grow over one side of Mildred's head.

Mildred bolted upright. 'I have a comb over!' Mildred realized suddenly. She was stricken. Even as she had been assessing the governor's wife's ill-kempt hair-do, she might have a worse problem of her own: blinding vanity.

The spec/plank issue often gave Mildred Budge starts of realization that led to repentance. "Sorry," she said to God, as she checked her watch. She had been practicing the Presence for two minutes – eight minutes to go.

Contemplation was hard.

Determined to come back to step one later, she moved on to step two.

2. Listen to your inner voice and find your heart's prayer.

The church lady tilted her head to listen to her inner voice and it said: 'You may be losing your hair.'

She automatically recited a few of the many disciplined answers that she knew to use when fear attacked: 'Everything is vanity. Dust to dust. Thy will be done.'

Then, she remembered something her hairdresser Michael often said: "Darling Miss Budge. It's only hair."

She smiled when she thought of Michael and how when she first sat down in his chair, he held her gaze in the mirror. That mattered. Deeply. For when a woman sat down in her beautician's chair, she was suddenly confronted with a hard look at herself. She always chose to meet Michael's gaze in the glass instead. He always saw her with affection, his brown eyes beaming in welcome. What a gift his gaze was – more important to Miss Budge, really, than the way his hands and scissors moved about her head. Miss Budge loved Michael. All the ladies did.

A welcome breeze stirred the gardenia bush then, and a fragrant white petal wafted and then landed in Miss Budge's ample lap. Her hand instinctively reached for the tender flower. She paused to enjoy its fragility – was preparing to contemplate its beauty and then meditate on it – but grew almost immediately solemn when she saw yet another of her precious brown hairs stuck to it.

"God have mercy," she prayed automatically.

No wonder so many of her girlfriends at church were worried. Hair thinning was a universal concern. The inevitable Biblical truth wafted to her consciousness as gracefully as a flower's petal: 'Every hair on your head is numbered.'

Holding the petal, she mused, 'Doesn't God count the falling sparrows – but don't they all fall? People, too.'

Mildred sighed. Six minutes to go. The sun was too hot. The blue net weaving felt scratchy against her legs. She felt fat. Maybe Michael could work her in later that afternoon. He knew the names of volumizing shampoos.

Miss Budge decided then to postpone her experiment in contemplation and devote the remaining minutes of her prayer time to intercessory prayer instead.

She began by praying for the governor's wife, bless her heart. Then, Miss Budge prayed for all of her friends and their problems. She prayed for Michael – and smiled. Michael's steadfast acceptance reminded Mildred that Jesus looked at her with love, too – only better. She breathed some of Jesus' promises: 'Cast your cares upon me. Come unto me and I will give you rest. I go to prepare a place for you. If it were not so, I would have told you.' Miss Budge believed everything Jesus said and trusted him about what he didn't explain.

Burdens lifted then. She started talking. "Thank you, Jesus, for life and for all that you are all the time whether

prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Cor. 3:2-3).

Preacher, will you show us the story behind, in, and through the text so that we can become a part of it?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. If someone asks, "What is this Gospel the preacher kept talking about," what would you say?
2. Choose a chapter from one of Paul's letters in the New Testament. Read it until you find a verse that lets the Story shine through clearly, and another verse that seems to hide the Story behind strange words. What would you expect from sermons preached from those verses?
3. Should we always be able to say, "heard the Gospel today" after we have listened to a sermon?



I understand you or not," Miss Budge said. Then she pushed herself up.

Standing, Mildred Budge knew that she had not fulfilled her mission – found a definitive heart's prayer that fit the order of contemplation from a book she admired. But her soul felt lighter and her heart, which just minutes before had been fraught with anxieties, had found a radiant stillness inside that caused her not to worry about hairstyles or new ways to pray or even what would seem in about fifteen minutes another profoundly important question: What would she have for lunch?

Story . . . continued from page 13

When we listen to sermons, we need to see God's Story behind the text. The Story of what God has done for us in the history of Israel and in the person of Christ gives us our identity, purpose, and hope. Some Bible texts are brilliantly clear and astonish us again and again by what God has done. Blessed are those who hear sermons that do not obstruct the view. Other texts are smudged by cultural differentness, strange language, and bewildering events. Sermons can help us see the Story more clearly and fully through them.

The Story behind, in, and through the text and sermon lives behind, in, and through the people who see and celebrate it. Those who hear and see become living texts and sermons in the world. We become, as Saint Paul said, "our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ,

4. What kinds of sermons seem to let the Story shine through, and what kinds of sermons seem to obscure the Story?
5. If we have seen the Gospel through text and sermon, how does that Gospel then become visible in our lives?

1. Luther, quoted by Richard Lischer in *A Theology of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), p. 70.
2. Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), pp. 95, 100.
3. William D. Thompson, *Preaching Biblically* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), p. 74.
4. Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Creative Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), p. 18.
5. David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 11.

Africa

Star power brings attention to Africa

Danna Harman

Neno, Malawi Rock star-like, wearing black jeans and a black T-shirt, he reaches into the screaming crowds. Then, he's in khaki casual, clapping for the leaping Masai dancers. Now, he's posing with a row of Malawian nurses in pressed, blue uniforms. And there he is with South Africa's Nelson Mandela, holding the anti-apartheid icon's hand gently as the cameras blink.

"Beeeee-ll," whispers one Tanzanian tyke, his chubby hand outstretched, and immediately breaks into nervous tears. "Beeeee-ll."

It's late July, and former President Bill Clinton is on a one-week whirlwind, four-country tour of Africa, grinning at the cameras and viewing aid projects.

The world's poorest, sickest, most war-ravaged continent is now the charity of choice for many of the West's best-known political, pop, and Hollywood stars. Think Bono, Madonna, and Oprah, just for starters.

Skeptics often belittle the rise in celebrity attention paid to Africa, calling it a fad. AIDS babies, hungry villagers, and uprooted refugees are today's must-have visual "accessories," they sneer, intended to burnish a star's profile in the eyes of a public that expects a moral dimension to its celebrities.

"This is the West's new image of itself: a sexy, politically active generation whose preferred means of spreading the word are magazine spreads with celebrities pictured in the foreground, forlorn Africans in the back," writes respected Nigerian-American novelist Uzodinma Iweala, in a July Washington Post opinion piece.

Mr. Clinton shakes his head. "Let's examine what's happening," he begins, in an interview over morning coffee in his hotel room in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. "A lot of artists, including movie stars, have a genuine feeling for people who are different from them," he says, warming to the topic. "It's easy . . . to say, 'Oh, this is not serious, they are just trying to get press.' My experience has been this is not true. Not everything every actor does, works. Just like not everything I do works. Not everything [Microsoft chairman] Bill Gates does works. But it's not true that it's not genuine. By and large, it just is."

Bruce Sievers, a visiting scholar at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., who is writing a book about the development of philanthropy, explains the surge in celebrity attention this way: "The bang for the buck is high in Africa. You can leverage your money and time. So you are not only bringing in more mosquito nets, but potentially shaping the entire national policy."

Of course, it's hard to gauge anyone's motivations. But one can ask whether these celebrities are really helping Africans.

The short answer: Yes, attention brings cash. But the quality and commitment of



Bill Clinton tours Africa

celebrity engagement varies widely.

Clinton's efforts, say a range of aid experts, offer an example of one of the more effective ways of using fame to do good.

The spotlight follows

Seventeen hours after leaving New York, with a pit stop in the Dominican Republic en route, Clinton arrives in Johannesburg, South Africa, to begin his journey. The first thing he does – before any visits to after-school programs, talks about climate change, or meetings about antiretroviral drug initiatives – is drop in on his friend Mr. Mandela. "Happy Birthday Madiba!" He sings, eyes twinkling, using the local nickname for the 89-year-old. "You are my inspiration in so much that I do." The elder man flashes a broad smile.

"Do these celebrities understand our issues?" asks Mandela's wife, activist Graça Machel, the former first lady of Mozambique. "Well, some do, some don't, to be honest."

But what is uniformly true about celebrities, she says, is that they get attention – for themselves, to some extent, but also for the issues they choose to highlight. And money usually follows attention.

"In some parts of this globe, there are persons that will listen to sports stars . . . but they won't listen to me," explains Ms. Machel. "In some parts of the world, a musician will have a better audience than a priest. . . . People will listen to a filmmaker, but not a woman leader." As long as these celebrities clearly define the issue they are dealing with and the audience they are ad-

ressing, she maintains, "Everyone has a space to participate."

Lionello Boscardi, the chief "celebrity handler" for the UN's World Food Program has worked with the likes of Angelina Jolie, designer Giorgio Armani, marathon runner Paul Tergat, opera singer Luciano Pavarotti, and, most recently, actress Drew Barrymore. "Usually celebrities are paid tens of thousands, even millions, to endorse products," he says. "Of course, we don't pay them, but we get much the same benefits from working with them, namely, they raise our profile."

Covering Clinton's annual Africa sojourn in previous years have been *The New Yorker*, *New York Magazine*,

and *Fortune* magazine. This year, *The Monitor*, ABC-TV, and *Elle* and *Ebony* magazines sent reporters. *GQ* magazine sent a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant" writer, a world-renowned photographer, and a senior editor – all following Clinton into the schoolyards of South Africa and antiretroviral drug warehouses of Tanzania.

Rarely does Africa get such high-gloss attention.

According to a June report by Julie Hollar of the national media watch group Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), wrapping Africa stories in celebrity news is par for the course. For example, she notes, in the week that "Blood Diamond," a Hollywood film starring Leonardo DiCaprio, was released in theaters last December, ABC, CBS, and NBC news programs mentioned the role of diamonds fueling Sierra Leone's bloody civil war 11 times. But during the entire length of that war, which lasted from 1991 to 2002, it was mentioned an average of twice a year.

Looking at one US network's overall coverage of Africa over 2005-06, FAIR found that NBC Nightly News ran 70 Africa-related segments, of which 18, or one-quarter, featured celebrities. "Many of those [stories] focused on Bono, with whom NBC anchor Brian Williams traveled to Africa in May 2006," points out FAIR, "a trip that generated seven stories, six of which prominently featured the rock star."

Columbia Journalism Review (CJR) critique points at a similar trend in the July *Van-ity Fair* special Africa issue. Guest edited by

Bono himself, the issue features 20 different covers, each of a different person involved in the "conversation" about Africa. Oprah, Brad Pitt, Madonna, and Jordan's Queen Rania – a UNICEF advocate – participated. But only three Africans (of which only one currently lives in Africa) are featured. "This is a conversation . . . by a group of well-known celebrities," says CJR writer Gal Beckerman. "They are the ones here with agency to tell the story of Africa."

But Clinton warns against being judgmental of either the media or its audience. It's not that Americans do not care about Africa. Rather, he argues, people are just busy. "Most people are living their own lives. . . . A lot of Americans have their own difficulties. Until someone sees someone they know and can identify with out here doing this [aid work], they may not – even if generally aware of a problem – they may not really believe that any time or money they give can make a difference," he says.

The Clinton entourage

"Which one? Which one?" panics Wilbert Wilson Magombo, a farmer in the rural Malawian village of Neno, who, along with thousands of others, has spent the day waiting for Clinton to arrive at this, his second stop on the journey. Mr. Magombo has neither a TV nor access to newspapers, so he has no idea what the famous man looks like. "We were told by our elders to be here and welcome Mr. President. But how will we know him?" he wonders. "There are so very many white visitors today!"

Indeed, the former president does not travel light.

On this trip, Clinton is joined by seven or eight of the top directors of his New York-based William J. Clinton Foundation, a couple of aides, more than a dozen Secret Service officers, a personal doctor, a personal photographer, 12 journalists, and a three-man press-handling team. In addition, there are a dozen wealthy donors who, last year, at an auction at Clinton's 60th birthday bash, bid tens of thousands of dollars – all of which goes to the foundation – to go on this journey.

This makes for some 40-odd Africa trippers traveling in grand style on two luxury private jets, one lent by a Canadian mining financier friend, the other by Google. Both aircraft are outfitted with leather couches, iPod docks, en suite bedrooms, free little tubes of Aveda hand cream, and friendly flight attendants sweetly asking if anyone would care for some cold cuts.

"You have rich people in America who are saying: 'There are plenty of Africans who could make as much money as I did. I was simply born in the right time in the right place. . . . They know that,'" says Clinton, giving a press conference on the jet, munching miniature pepperoni pizza slices. "There is no place you can go where you don't come away with the feeling that poor people are

Africa

Is Western aid making a difference in Africa?

Two US economists debate the value of antipoverty efforts.

Danna Harman

"Is this really how to save Africa?" asks Tanzanian columnist Ayub Rioba, a day after Bill Clinton has left Africa. "We appreciate generous and humane contributions from people like Bill Clinton," he writes in *The Citizen*, a respected Tanzanian national daily paper. "But we [Africans] must also show that we are doing something. We cannot sit just like couch potatoes waiting for others to come and give us medicine."

"We have been made permanent recipients of aid, funds, scholarships, food, medicine, from developed countries.... And what exactly do we do with all that aid and assistance and help? Almost nothing. Since we gained independence, almost 50 years ago, we have been receiving aid permanently, and statistics today indicate that we are becoming poorer!" adds the columnist.

Outside attention to the continent has fueled thousands of successful programs ranging from eradicating smallpox and reducing infant mortality rates to helping more children go to school and more farmers get

microloans. But, despite the aid, the number of poor people in Africa has almost doubled in the past decade.

Burdened as Africa is with government debt, trade barriers, droughts, and sickness, some 46 percent of Africans survive on less than a dollar a day. Nearly half of those make do with less than 50 cents a day, according to the development policy research unit the University of Cape Town in South Africa. According to the United Nations, life expectancy on the continent is falling, averaging just 46 years, in large part because of AIDS.

There are different schools of thought when it comes to explaining Africa's decline – and how to stop it.

Mr. Rioba fits squarely in the "governance first" camp, which argues that the onus is on Africans to better their own governments and behavior – not on outsiders.

For decades, countries such as Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) under Mobutu Sese Seko received billions of dollars in aid and loans – much of which

was squandered by corrupt and incompetent officials.

Against this first camp sits the so-called "poverty first" camp, often represented by Columbia University economist and UN Millennium Project director Jeffrey Sachs, who says the solution to Africa's problems lies in tackling poverty, and that this can definitely be achieved with sufficient aid.

A third group believes in aid, but argues it's not the quantity that is problematic, it's the way it has been administered.

If ending poverty were so simple, argues William Easterly, a professor of economics at New York University, why has the \$2.3 trillion spent over the last five decades not done more? "The biggest difference between Sachs and me is that he thinks aid can end poverty and I think it cannot," he says. "The end of poverty comes about for home-grown reasons, as domestic reformers grope their way towards more democracy, cleaner and more accountable government, and free markets," he says. Mr. Easterly says aid can certainly help alleviate the suffering of the

poor, but that "the problem with aid is the people implementing the aid projects have weak incentives because they are never held accountable for results."

Mr. Sachs, in turn, poses: Is \$2.3 trillion really so much? That sum, he says, is "from all donor countries in the world to all developing countries for all purposes," which means, if you work it out, around \$16 per person per year in the developing world.

"To say that aid was gargantuan and that it failed is a cruel joke. It was neither gargantuan, nor did it fail when it was applied in good faith for developmental purposes (rather than for the cold war, or to ship US grains or to pay high-priced consultants)," he argues.

Sachs points out that the US spends more than \$600 billion per year on the Pentagon, and less than one-hundredth of that in help for all of Africa. "One day's Pentagon spending would pay for all the bed nets [to stop malaria] for every sleeping site in Africa for five years," he charges. "People are hungry. People are dying. There are countless proven and effective ways to help, and which can extricate people from poverty in the long run. The drama is whether American politics can rouse itself to take note," he says.

In his quest for spreading this message and increasing aid, Sachs often turns to superstars, and many have embraced his ideas and his can-do attitude. Bono calls him "my professor." Actor Brad Pitt sings his praises. Madonna is a big supporter, and Angelina Jolie filmed a 2005 MTV special, "The Diary of Angelina Jolie & Dr. Jeffrey Sachs in Africa" that promotes his work. *Vanity Fair*, in its recent Africa issue billed him an "adviser to the UN and movie stars" and a "savior" of developing nations.

"Sachs offers very simple, concrete, and measurable solutions to specific developmental problems," says John Prendergast of ENOUGH, a group with a mission to "prevent genocide and mass atrocities" in Africa. "He doesn't necessarily have answers to major crises like Darfur and eastern Congo, but he does have important responses to malaria, dirty water, and bad sanitation. That is an important baseline for further socioeconomic development in the long run."

But Easterly is not impressed, calling Sachs a "messianic crusader who ... skillfully uses celebrity and media for the cause." Celebrities "love" Sachs, explains Easterly, "because he promises a huge payoff to Western aid efforts and describes the problem as easy to solve, if you just have a few celebrity videos and concerts." Easterly suggests aid dividends will almost always be modest. The solution requires donors to help continuously and be accountable for results. But he says, that is just "not as ... appealing to the *People* magazine crowd."

Star power...continued from p. 16



Bono in Africa

just as smart as anyone else. They work just as hard, usually harder than anyone else, just to keep body and soul together and keep their children alive. What's missing is opportunity and systems and access to education and money. That's where we can help." Clinton sees part of his mission as showing wealthy individuals what they can accomplish here. Two years ago, he brought Tom Hunter on one of these trips. It worked out well – illustrating Clinton's involvement in Africa at its best.

The two had met at a dinner party in London earlier that year. Mr. Hunter, the wealthiest man in Scotland, was seated next to the former president. "I knew very little about Africa, so he said: 'If you are genuinely interested in Africa, come travel with me,'" recalls the dapper billionaire businessman.

During that trip, Hunter says, his "eyes

were opened," but he felt clueless about how to proceed. "I said, 'How on earth could I make a difference? I don't know anyone, I'm not networked here at all.' And then I thought if we are going to get involved, what better partner could there be than President Clinton?"

Hunter subsequently pledged \$100 million, launching the

Clinton-Hunter development initiative under the Clinton Foundation umbrella. Today, he is on one of his frequent visits, checking in on his various projects to expand access to water, sanitation, healthcare, and agricultural markets in Malawi and Rwanda. The respected organization Partners in Health (PIH), run by Harvard infectious disease specialist Paul Farmer, is implementing some of the Hunter projects here. The goal is to double per capita income within 10 years in the areas where they are working.

"In the last five years, there has been an explosion of celebrity attention to development, but Clinton is in a different category," says Mr. Farmer, who, like Hunter, is in Neno, Malawi, waiting for the former president to arrive. "He is serious about the details. He keeps all his promises and he is extremely effective. In 20 years working in [development] . . . I have not seen stuff

move as quickly."

The only thing not moving quickly at the moment, Farmer would agree, is Clinton himself. He's stuck at the Johannesburg airport, where one of the swanky private jets has come down with engine trouble. The heat rises and the day drags on. A group of women in sarongs emblazoned with pictures of the Malawian president have been chanting "Welcome to our Village" for seven hours now.

And then, finally, just as one of the singers swoons and the ABC news crew finishes shooting more footage of rural Malawi than the network will need in a century, the 42nd president of the United States arrives. Sand flies everywhere as his helicopter touches down.

Clinton emerges as a whirling dervish of enthusiasm. He talks harvest details with the farmers, his mouth permanently puckered into an intrigued and encouraging "Ooo," as the intricacies of transporting wheat to the capital are translated from Chichewa. He zooms along waving in his Land Rover motorcade, his eyes crinkling in delight. He hugs his friends Farmer and Hunter. He stops by a construction site and high-fives the workers, gives a quick press conference to the local press, and is off again, sand flying everywhere as the helicopter rises.

Magombo still does not know what Clinton looks like. "He was a bit far away, unfortunately," explains the farmer as he prepares to walk six kilometers home. But, it has been a "very interesting day," he confirms. "This visit is precious. We are so appreciative of Mr. President's attention and for his financial assistance," he says. "We are just poor farmers, and so we are so grateful."

Sermon

I believe in the Holy Spirit, and the communion of saints . . . I think

The following was prepared for the Telkwa, B.C. CRC for a special service on July 9 by Curt Gesch. The skit was also his idea.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, and the communion of saints . . . I think

Texts: Galatians 2:11-14; Acts 15: 1-35

Themes:

- God really is sovereign
- Jesus Christ really is with us
- The Holy Spirit really does guide us

You are the Man. You are the Rock, the Christ-appointed leader of the church.

You've had your problems, but you've also learned. You're trying to "feed the sheep" and "tend the sheep" – the disciples of Christ all over the world.

You've had a vision. The vision showed you a sheet with unclean, impure animals on it, and God told you to eat because He was the one who decided who was clean and unclean. And you learned that this applied to people. To Cornelius, a non-Jewish military leader. He was a God-fearer, but not a full-fledged convert to Judaism.

And then this fellow believed in Christ as Saviour. He received water baptism and the Holy Spirit was poured out on him. So you – as church leader – accepted him.

And as leader you reported back to James and the other Jerusalem church establishment that God-fearing Gentiles were also part of God's kingdom.

So far, so good.

And things were going well. A strong new church developed in Antioch, one of the major Roman urban centres. This church sent out missionaries, that former persecutor Saul – now called Paul – and Barnabas.

So there you are, sitting in a hall with these new Christians – "brothers in Christ." You're maybe having a glass of wine (coffee not being yet known in the Roman Empire) with some of the church members from Antioch. Things are going well. You're building bridges.

And then some folks arrive. They arrive from Jerusalem, birth place of the church, spiritual centre of Christianity. They arrive, being sent by James, your co-leader. They are sent on a fact-finding trip. They have heard that these Gentile Christians don't even consider being circumcized or following other Old Testament practices. And they are here to see for themselves.

Well . . . you don't want to offend them. And it is considered "unclean" to eat or drink with a non-Jew, so you take your goblet and move to the visitors' table.

To keep the peace.

Barnabas, the encourager, joins you.

But not that Paul fellow. He makes a big scene.

He walks over to you, looks you in the eye and says (of all things, to you – the Rock!):

"You are a hypocrite." "You are wrong."

And he's got a point. You have had the experience with Cornelius. But that was the result of a vision. Here we have a problem with group solidarity. You have to play things safe. You've had no visions this time.

But he's got a point: you have been eating and drinking with Gentile Christians and were not ashamed. But now there is quite a bit of pressure.

What to do. . .

Ah . . . some of you may not like this answer, but it's the one God guided Peter, Paul, Barnabas, the Antioch and Jerusalem Christians to take.

Call a meeting.

Have a discussion. Pray. Hear reports (no doubt majority and minority reports).

Have an open meeting, then a leader's meeting.

Have not just a congregational meeting, but a classis, a synod: a major church council.

Pray again. Think and discuss.

Decide on an issue – "Must Christians follow the law of circumcision, the foundational ceremony of God's covenant, starting with Abraham?"

Jesus never directly addressed this matter.

And no one reports a vision.

So you think, you discuss, you pray, you meditate, and you decide . . . with fear and trembling.

You decide that Jesus may not have spoken directly on this matter but he did promise you that when he ascended into heaven he'd send his Spirit to be with you, with the church. And you remember what Jesus said, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

And so you act, using all the scriptural knowledge, the reports, the Godly intuitions, the discussions, your openness in prayer, the backgrounds and feelings and expectations of Jewish Christians, of Gentile Christians, your fervent supplications. . .

. . . you act as church, as leaders appointed by Christ,

. . . and you make a compromise. Not a compromise that means "anything goes." Not a compromise that says, "Well, everything is relative anyway." Not a compromise that says, "There is no absolute truth."

But a compromise that takes into account the whole scope of the scriptures, the attitude and teachings and actions of Christ, . . .

a compromise founded in truth, and rooted in love of the family of God.

You're not even sure that you message to the Antiochan Christians –

- circumcision is not necessary, (but)

- you must abstain from eating meat dedicated to idols;

- and you must not eat meat killed by strangling or without proper bleeding;

- and you must abstain from sexual immorality –

You're not even sure that this is the last word. You didn't mention the rest of the ten commandments, and all sorts of other good things.

. . . but you were called to decide, and so you did, trusting in God to guide you.

You did not "play politics," though you were sensitive to the needs of the group.

You were not "pushing your own agenda," although you may have thought the decision a wise one.

You were exercising authority in love, as best you knew how.

And so you told the Antiochan Christians, "Here's what we decided, – *it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.*"

Friends and visitors: the Christian church is still doing the same sort of thing as we read about in Acts 15. It studies, prays, discusses, and decides . . . with fear and trembling.

In this congregation we see this in congregational meetings. We hear about it in church council reports to the congregation. We send delegates to classis. And this church has been privileged to send many delegates to the bi-national Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, which meets every year. This June, John Wisselink attended the Synod, and I've asked him to report on how he experienced the decision-making at Synod in 2007 on a topic that – while not nearly as "big" as the circumcision issue was in Jerusalem – (that) needed a decision made in a Biblical way.



Friends and visitors:

Christian churches are called to come to decisions today on all sorts of things. If they play politics, churches need to be called to account. If they form power groups to push agendas, they need to be called to account.

But God's church needs to speak and to decide. The church can do this because of three undeniable truths:

- God really is sovereign.
- Jesus Christ really is with us.
- The Holy Spirit really does guide us.

May we be Christians, may we be a church that speaks humbly but with conviction, when it says: "It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

God's teaches us his ways (Galatians 2:11-14) as skit:

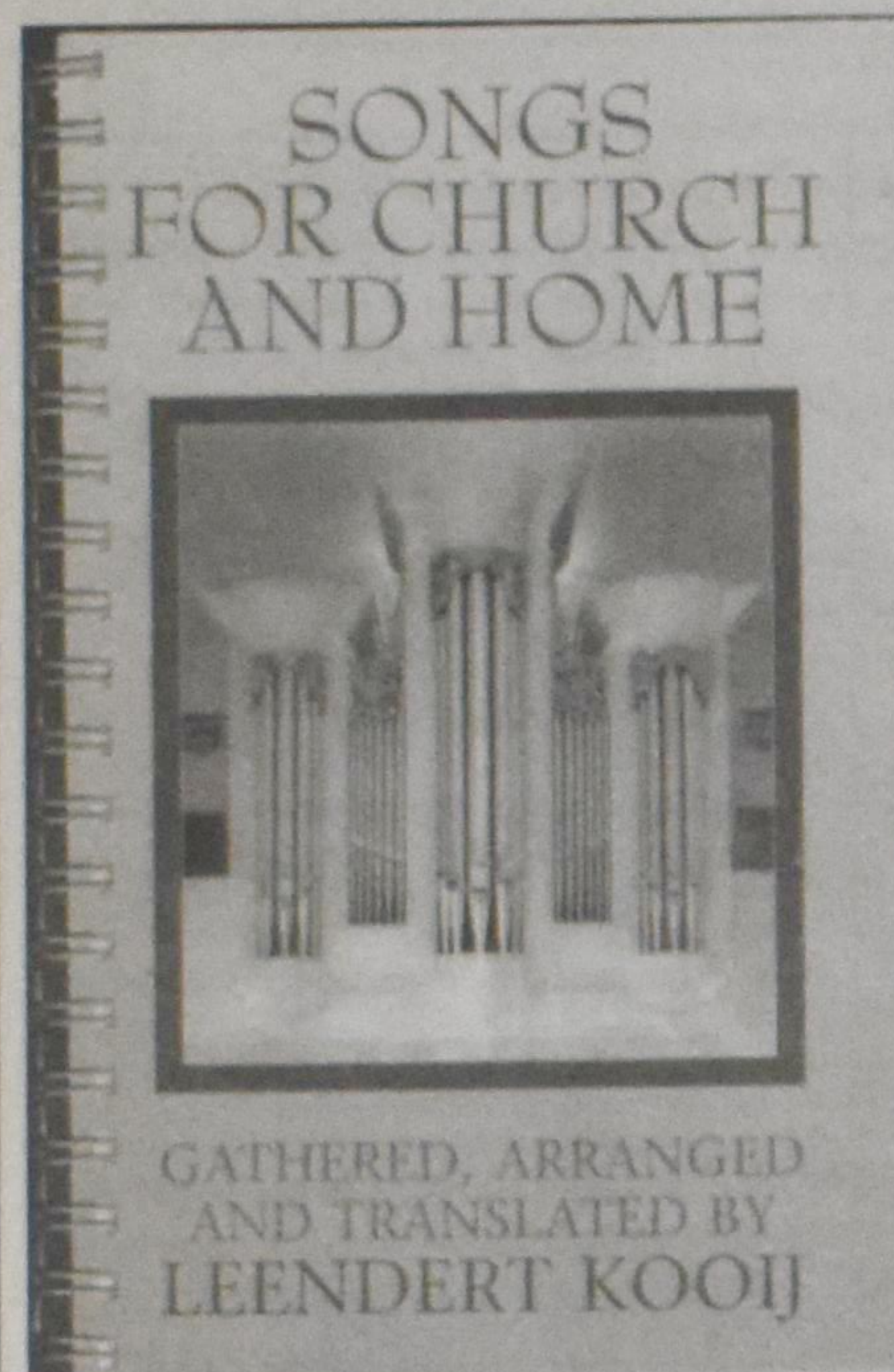
Characters:

- Peter (apostle, leader of the church) (had vision of the sheet and told people about God giving salvation to Gentiles after the Cornelius episode)
- men "from James" (Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, sent by James, the other major early church leader)
- group of Gentile Christians (uncircumcized, Greek or other background)
- other Jewish Christians from the Antioch church
- Barnabas (the encourager!)

Actions, scene:

- Room with Peter sitting at a table talking with some Gentile Christians and drinking coffee (wine)
 - Jewish Christians from Jerusalem come and look at the Gentile Christians disapprovingly and sit by themselves in spite of being invited, "Here, have a seat with us!"
 - Other Jewish Christians from Antioch leave the table and go sit with the "pure" Jewish Christians from Jerusalem.
 - Peter looks around, sees the disapproval from the Jerusalem crowd, and leaves the Gentile Christians' table and joins the Jewish Christians.
 - Barnabas looks around, and even he! joins Peter and the Jerusalem crowd.
- Paul stands up, walks over to Peter and tells Peter how wrong Peter is. Doesn't he remember about Cornelius, and that Jesus is Lord of all the people? He rebukes Peter very loudly and publicly.*

Review



Songs for Church and Home

Gathered, arranged and translated by Leendert Kooij
Leendert Kooij Records and Books
263 pp.

Leendert Kooij has assembled a unique book of songs in this volume, many translated from the Dutch and arranged by himself. He has also gathered a wide variety of favorites from elsewhere and provided his own arrangement or harmonization. It is titled *Songs for Church and Home*, but while many songs are wholly suitable for church, this is not a hymnal that will make it into the pews. It is simply too loaded with the Dutch heritage.

It includes over 100 songs translated from the Dutch, from children's songs like "Klokje Klinkt"

and "Ik ga slapen ik ben moe" to "Daar ruist langs de wolken" and "Nu daagt het in het oosten". But Mr. Kooij has also picked out some oldies and updated them with new arrangements: "Like a river glorious," "Stand up, stand up for Jesus," "Safe in the arms of Jesus" and many others. But he has not neglected the contemporary, also including a number of current praise songs that he has touched with his own style.

The song book is divided into several sections. After the opening miscellany follow a section of 30 Christmas songs (several new ones); the some Popular Songs (including "Land of the silver birch"); Children's songs; Psalms and Others (including a translation of "Looft God, looft zijn naam alom"); and ending with a diverse collection called Hymns and Songs (including a translation of "k'Heb geloofd en daarom zing ik" and a new harmonization of "Joyful, joyful we adore you").

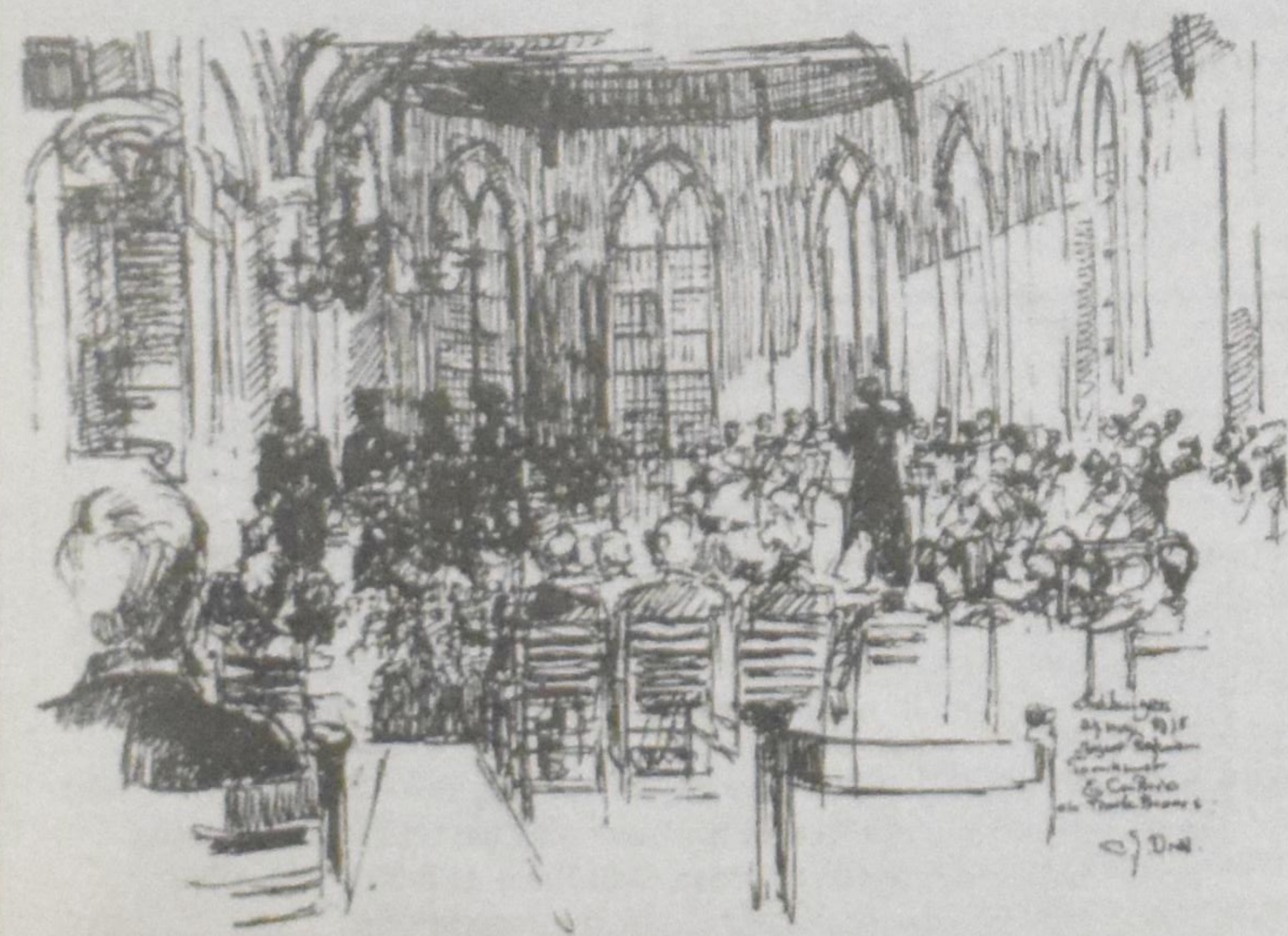
It's a rich and varied selection, well bound with a metal spiral so it lies flat on the piano. It is also illustrated with many beautiful drawings throughout. *Songs for Church and Home* is an admirable achievement and Mr. Kooij is to be congratulated. The song book will give special enjoyment to those who sang many of these songs in The Netherlands and who may wish to share them with their children and grandchildren. Put it on your Christmas list.

Leendert Kooij Records and Books
90 Topcliff Avenue
North York ON Canada M3N 1L8

Phone: 416-636-9779
email: landmkooy@rogers.com

Price is \$19.95 can. plus \$8.00 for postage and handling.

Special discounts for churches, choirs and clubs on orders over \$100. - postage and handling free



Nuclear energy . . . continued from page 1

industry to convince the public that nuclear power is both safe and cheap. That still needs to be demonstrated.

However, in the U.S. numerous power companies are betting on a nuclear future. They know that solar and wind power will never provide anything but a small fraction of the power demanded by an energy hungry economy. America's Nuclear Regulatory Commission which oversees licensing has received a dozen applications for building new plants and many more are in preparation. This will mean a big boost for Canada's uranium industry, which has seen some lean times.

Much of the industry's confidence comes from a new generation much improved over those built in the 70s and 80s. The latest designs are considered to be much safer because they are much simpler. Construction methods, too, have been greatly improved and streamlined. Because construction costs make up such a large part of the cost, the industry has worked especially hard to speed up construction. One of the latest plants to be built under the old order took 23 years to finish and another, still unfinished, is taking even longer. This multiplies labor costs, not to mention tying up capital and multiplying interest. Many companies buckled under the strain. Had it not been for government subsidies and bail-outs, many more would have foundered.

However, over the years engineers and technicians have improved the operation of existing plants. Instead of being shut down some 50 percent of the time, nuclear plants are now operating 90 percent of the time. Other parts of the process, such as the steam turbines that actually generate the electrical power, have seen substantial improvements in efficiency. So now older plants are very profitable.

To speed up the construction process, the U.S. government has greatly simplified the licensing procedure. In the past, licensing not only caused delays but also introduced a high degree of uncertainty. Interminable hearings and last hour protests and local resistance prevented plants that were built from going into operation. The fiasco of building a plant for billions of dollars and then refusing it an operating license will not be repeated under the new system of licensing. Approval of reactor designs will now be done beforehand, and the construction and operating licenses will be combined.

Bankers, however, have been badly burned in the past and are not eager to lend money to build nuclear plant without some sort of warranty. The U.S. Congress has been more than happy to provide that - in spades, suggests *The Economist*. They can now lend the builders of nuclear plants while taking virtually no risk, as the government is promising to guarantee some 80

percent of the loan.

Another development that may make nuclear reactors more acceptable is the creation of "fast" reactors. These are able to burn up some of the radioactive wastes produced by the slower reactors and to extract even more energy from the original fuel. The waste from these reactors would be far less toxic, too, losing its radioactivity much faster - in terms of hundreds of years instead of hundreds of thousands of years.

However, this technology has not yet been tested on a commercial scale and no "fast" reactors are even in the planning stages.

Worldwide construction

Worldwide, according to the Nuclear Energy Association, there are 440 nuclear plants in operation, with 26 under construction and 44 more in the planning stages. Most of the new ones are going up in Asia, especially in China and India. But one is also under construction in Finland, and France, which already has 59 reactors, is also planning more. Britain is studying the prospect of adding more nuclear power, as is Australia, which has no nuclear power as yet.

The US, if all the applications and plans are approved could see some two dozen plants going up over the next two decades. This will increase the number of nuclear plants there by about one-third.

Nothing much has been happening in Canada on the nuclear front, although Ontario has been updating older plants and is talking about the need for more energy. In 2003 the Sierra Club predicted that in the next 10 to 15 years electricity produced by nuclear power would be phased out completely in Canada. It reached its peak in 1994 and has been declining ever since. In 2003 it was producing at only 60 percent of its peak level. The Candu reactors have aged more quickly than expected and several had to be shut down to rebuild their cores.

The Sierra Club did not, of course, recommend relying on the old oil and coal fueled power plants but touted conservation, increased efficiency, and alternative energy sources that will eventually eliminate our reliance on centralized nuclear and fossil fuel plants.

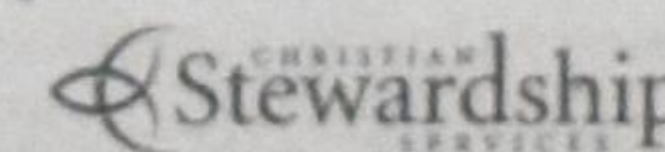
It is a utopian vision that very few analysts believe will really be able to address the needs of a country like Canada. If this country doesn't increase its ability to produce energy, it will probably end up buying it from nuclear plants operating south of the border.

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Classifieds

Anniversary		Obituaries	
<p>Beilen 1947 Strathroy 2007 October 21</p> <p>With joy and thankfulness to the Lord we celebrate the 60th Wedding Anniversary of our parents</p> <p>ALBERT AND ANNIE MOES (nee Schipper)</p> <p>May God continue to bless you, keep you and be near to both of you.</p> <p>With love, your children: Henry Moes, Jane VanArnhem, John Moes, Rhoda Wassing, Ron Moes, Rick Moes & their spouses as well as your grandchildren and great-grandchildren</p> <p>Home: 62-400 Dominion St, Strathroy ON N7G 3G8</p>		<p><i>No one can snatch them out of my hand.</i> John 10:28</p> <p>On August 13, 2007, at Grace Manor (Nursing Home), Brampton, Ontario, our Lord in his infinite wisdom, mercy and love, called home:</p> <p>SUZANNA DeKOTER (nee Imans)</p> <p>March 8, 1916 August 13, 2007</p> <p>Predeceased by her late husband Pieter DeKoter in 2006.</p> <p>Dear mother of: Larry & Willy DeKoter, London, Ont. Tony & Mary DeKoter, Port-au-Prince, Haiti Gremar & Rev. Case Van Wyk, Newaygo, MI Grandmother of: Rodney & Marietta, David & Tina, Kenneth & Leona, Jeffery & Kathy, Susan & Mark Dieleman, Janis & David Persenaire, Stephen & Adria Van Wyk, Tina Van Wyk and Becky Van Wyk Lovingly remembered by 12 great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Also survived by one brother & sister-in-law in St. Catharines, Ont. and one sister-in-law in the Netherlands.</p> <p>The funeral took place in Brampton, Ont. on August 16th with Rev. J. Kuntz officiating.</p> <p>Correspondence address: L. DeKoter 961 Crumlin Road, London ON N5V 1R6</p>	
<p>Classifieds</p> <p>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION <i>Christian Courier</i> is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date.</p> <p>RATE: (GST added to rates listed) All personal and family announcements: \$6.00 per square inch. rose@christiancourier.ca Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: \$8.00 per square inch. email: ads@christiancourier.ca</p> <p>PHOTOS: There is a processing fee of \$25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged per square inch but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original photo (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.</p> <p>PERSONAL ADS: <i>Christian Courier</i> would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$25. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$8 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS: We offer a \$25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in <i>Christian Courier</i> and to parents who announce a child's birth in our paper. If you want to take advantage of this offer, please let us know when placing your ad.</p> <p>SUBMITTING YOUR AD Mail: <i>Christian Courier</i> 5 Joanna Dr St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1 fax: 905-682-8313 e-mail: see above</p> <p>OTHER INFORMATION: <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format and editing style and is not responsible for any errors due to hand-written or phoned-in advertisements.</p>		<p>Nov. 16, 1916 - Aug. 31, 2007 <i>FL</i></p> <p><i>I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness.</i> 2 Timothy 4:7,8</p> <p>On Friday August 31, 2007 the Lord called to glory</p> <p>HENDERIKA WESSELING (nee Moes)</p> <p>his child our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother in her 91st year.</p> <p>Mom will always be remembered for her unwavering and steadfast faith in God, which was a testimony to us all.</p> <p>Born in Nieuw Amsterdam (Drente) The Netherlands, she was the loving wife of Dirk Wesseling for nearly 60 years until his death in 1998.</p> <p>They immigrated to the Simcoe, Ontario area in 1951 where they eventually established "The House Of Textiles."</p> <p>Loving and devoted mother of: Christine & Martin Herrewynen, Brantford, ON Jane & Paul Herrewynen, Simcoe, ON Ralph & Simone Wesseling, Tampa, FL Connie & Chris Snoek, Ottawa, ON Alice & Bob Van Wingerden, Burlington, ON Henry & Deb Wesseling, Delhi, ON Diane & Harv Geerlinks, Georgetown, ON</p> <p>Loving Oma of 27 grandchildren and 45 great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Predeceased by a younger sister and two brothers.</p> <p>Funeral service was held on Wednesday Sept. 5, 2007 at the Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Simcoe ON</p> <p>Correspondence: Christine Herrewynen 62 Deerpark Ave Brantford ON N3R 8B1</p>	
		<p><i>As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for you, O God.</i> Psalm 42:1</p> <p>On Saturday, September 8, 2007 our Lord called to glory, his child</p> <p>TERESA (Tetje) BOOTSMA (nee Wiersma)</p> <p>our beloved Mem, Beppe, Super Beppe, in her 93rd year. Teresa was born in Koudum, Friesland, The Netherlands on November 11, 1914.</p> <p>She was the dear wife of Wilfred (Wiebe†1993) for 57 years. Together with their children, they immigrated to Canada in 1957, settling on a dairy farm in Marburg, Ontario in 1958. Mrs. Bootsma lived the last 3 months at Parkview Meadows, "Garden-view" in Townsend. Mem will always be remembered for her hard work and exquisite hand-work.</p> <p>Dear Mem to 11 children: Harry & Paula Bootsma of Brantford, Pat & Dick (†2002) Mostert of Newcastle, Infant twins (†1939), Jack & Ankje Bootsma of Port Dover, Bill & Gertie Bootsma of Forest, Shirley & Dick Rauwerda of Jarvis, Stuart & Jackie Bootsma of Ancaster, Wilfred Bootsma of Brantford, Jessy Bootsma of Toronto and Wendy & Rick Verkerk of Caledonia.</p> <p>Beloved Beppe to 47 grandchildren and Super Beppe to 92 great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Predeceased by 1 granddaughter, 2 great-granddaughters as well as her siblings in Holland. Teresa is survived by 3 sisters-in-law, Janke Wiersma, Jeltje De Young, Sijrkje Harkema and brother-in-law Wiepke & wife Wiepie Bootsma.</p> <p>The funeral service was held at Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church in Jarvis on Tuesday. Donations to Jarvis District Christian School would be appreciated by the family.</p> <p>Friends are invited to send condolences to the family at www.cooperfuneralhome.ca</p>	
		<p>Events</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p>The congregation of the MARANATHA CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada will celebrate, the Lord willing, 40 years of God's grace and faithfulness on October 28, 2007 at the 9.30 a.m. service.</p> <p>We invite all former members and friends to join us.</p> <p>For more info including RSVP's call the clerk Mr. Ron Rupke phone 905-851-7636 or email rrupke701@rogers.com</p> </div> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p>IMMANUEL CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH of Simcoe, Ont. Canada invites all members, former members and friends to join them in celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness Planned activities include a banquet on Sat. October 13 and a worship service on Oct. 14th, 2007 Banquet tickets must be purchased before Sept. 29th For more info please contact Alice Bokma at 519-428-4679 or e-mail her at jandabokma@sympatico.ca</p> </div> </div>	
<p>Personals</p> <p>Mature Christian lady, 50's, seeks correspondence with marriage-minded Christian man. Reply to: File 2760 c/o Christian Courier 5 Joanna Drive St Catharines ON L2N 1V1</p> <p>Single, Christian woman in her 30's would like to correspond/meet a Christian man also in his 30's. Reply to: File 2761 c/o Christian Courier 5 Joanna Dr St Catharines ON L2N 1V1</p>		<p>DAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT Saturday October 20 A DAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT and training for deacons, elders and all other interested church members takes place at Hamilton District Christian High School in Ancaster. Choose from 50 workshops. All sessions are open to everyone. Cost \$55. Contact your deacons for a registration form or download from www.diaconalministries.com. For more information call the Diaconal Ministries office at 905-336-2920.</p>	
<p>Vacation</p> <p>HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND. Beautiful self-contained cottage in Friesland www.chestnutlane.nl</p>		<p>DUTCH SERVICE The Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church in Niagara Falls (4878 Jepson Street) would like to invite you to a special Dutch worship service at 6:00 p.m. on October 7, 2007.</p> <p>A tour group from the Netherlands will be visiting, and their leader, Reformed pastor, Rev. B. Weegink, from Katwijk, will be preaching in Dutch. For more information call Rev. Rudy W. Ouwehand at 905-358-9498</p>	
<p>October 14, 2007 – DUTCH SERVICE will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Henry R. De Bolster will be preaching.</p>		<p>Do you know someone who may enjoy reading the <i>Christian Courier</i>? Let us know their name and address and we will send the next four issues to them at no cost. Call Rose at 1-800-969-4838 or email: rose@christiancourier.ca</p>	

Classifieds / Job Opportunities

DUNDAS CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

invites applications for the position of

Principal

Due to the upcoming retirement of our administrator, Dundas Calvin Christian School is actively seeking applications for a full-time Principal commencing for the 2008-2009 school year. DCCS is a K-Grade 8 school in existence for over 45 years, with 200 students, and a staff of ten full-time teachers and office staff. DCCS is located in the Golden Horseshoe area of Ontario, and is supported by a strong and stable Christian community in Dundas, Flamborough, and Waterdown.

The mission of DCCS is to provide a Christ centred, quality education, develop the talents of God's children, and prepare them for Christian service. The Board of DCCS is looking for an administrator who will passionately lead the implementation of this mission.

We are seeking candidates with a sincere faith in Jesus Christ, who will use their existing Christian leadership skills to mentor staff and students. In addition, the candidate will envision and challenge the school to grow spiritually and academically, have the appropriate training and experience, and a commitment to the Reformed Christian worldview. The ideal candidate would have, or be working towards a CSPC.

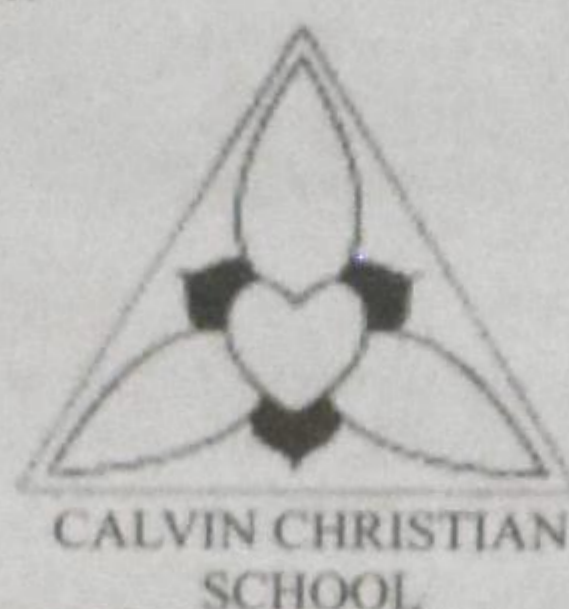
An information package is available for interested applicants upon request. Interested candidates should send cover letter, resume (with references), statement of faith, and philosophy of Christian education to the contact information below.

This is a full time position, commencing August 1, 2008.

Application deadline is November 15, 2007.

James Schenk, Search Committee Chair
Dundas Calvin Christian School
542 Ofield Road North, RR2,
Dundas, Ontario, L9H 5E2.

or email: janetschenk@aol.com



The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has an opening for a

FULL-TIME DONOR DEVELOPER

with Christian Reformed Home Missions in Canada. The purpose of this position is to develop and nurture donor relationships through personal relationships with individuals, corporations and foundations through-out Canada for the ministry of Home Missions. The ideal candidate will possess or have demonstrated relational skills with a proven track record in the area of marketing, sales and/or fund development. *Open to the possibility of a split between two part-time regional positions.*

Eligibility to work in Canada is required with the ability to travel.

In keeping with our Equal Opportunity policy, we encourage applicants from any ethnic (racial) community and applicants with disabilities to apply.

A position description is available on-line at www.crcna.org. For consideration, submit a current resume and letter of interest to apply@crcna.org by **October 12, 2007**.



Dordt College Faculty Positions

Dordt College is seeking applications in the following areas:

August, 2008

Art

Teach introductory and upper division fine art media courses, particularly in the areas of drawing, painting, and sculpture as well as teaching art history.

Business Administration

Teach courses in management and/or marketing. Applicants should have professional experience and degree in the field; preference given for those with ability to assist with departmental leadership and development.

Communication

Teach introductory and advanced courses; preference given to applicants able to teach Public Relations and Organizational Communication.

Criminal Justice

Teach in an interdisciplinary criminal justice program. Applicants should have professional experience and degree in the field. Background in sociology, political science or public administration desirable.

Economics

Teach introductory and advanced economics courses within a Business Administration program.

Education

Teach courses in special education, ESL, and teaching methods, and supervise student teachers.

English (Half-time)

Teach introductory writing and literature courses.

Physics/Astronomy

Teach introductory and advanced courses.

Psychology (Possible)

Teach introductory and advanced research-focused courses (e.g., Learning, Biopsychology, I/O, Statistics).

To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-1198

E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu

Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.



OACS

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS), Ontario's oldest and largest independent school organization representing 80 non-denominational Christian schools, is seeking to appoint a suitable candidate for the position of Director of Development.

This full-time position is designed to meet the challenge of expanding the OACS's capacity to provide leading edge, fully-integrated Christian curriculum resources for elementary and secondary Christian schools in Canada.

A detailed job description is available on our web site at www.oacs.org/webservices/jobs.

If you have experience in either business or education development work, and want to join an established professional organization, please send your inquiries and/or resumes to:

Dr. A. Guldmond, Executive Director
Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools
617 Garner Road, E.,
Ancaster ON L9G 3K9

Informal inquiries can be made to the
Executive Director at adriang@oacs.org.



www.oacs.org

HOUSTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

With the upcoming retirement of principal Jack VandenBorn in June 2008, the board invites inquiries or applications for that position: 50% teaching – 50% administration.

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Jack Vanden Born (principal)

Phone: 250-845-7736 FAX: 250-845-7738

E-mail hcschool@telus.net

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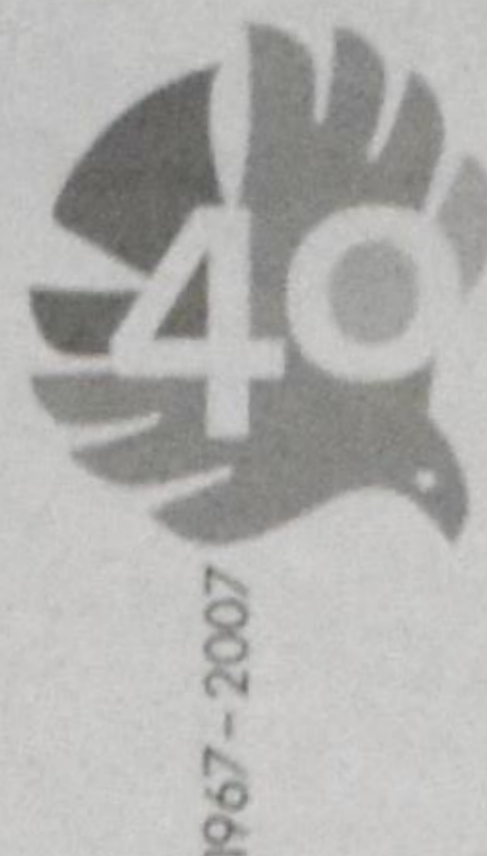
Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sep 28 Retirement Celebration for Co Vanderlaan (CLAC) in **Edmonton**. See ad Sep 10 issue.
- Sep 29 Netherlands Bazaar, **Thornhill** Community Centre. See ad for details.
- Oct 7 The Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church in **Niagara Falls** (4878 Jepson Street) would like to invite you to a **special Dutch worship** service at 6:00 pm. A tour group from the Netherlands will be visiting, and their leader, Reformed pastor, Rev. B. Weegink, from Katwijk, will be preaching. For information call Rev. Rudy W. Ouwehand at 905-358-9498.
- Oct 13,14 Immanuel Christian Ref. Church, **Simcoe**, On. 50-year anniversary. See ad page 20.
- Oct 14 Dutch Service will be held in the Ancaster CRC at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Henry R. De Bolster will be preaching.
- Oct 20 Day of Encouragement and training for deacons, elders and all other interested church members. See ad p. 21
- Oct 28 Maranatha CRC, Woodbridge, Ont. 40 year anniversary. See ad page 20

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News

Climate-change paradox: Greenhouse gas is Big Oil boon

With enough CO₂ injected into declining oil fields, the US could see its petroleum reserves quadruple.

Mark Clayton

Snyder, Texas – Gazing across a rejuvenated old West Texas oil field, Larry Adams sings the praises of carbon dioxide.

That might seem odd. The gas is linked to global warming, which has prompted calls from governments and environmentalists alike to reduce oil use. But here at the SACROC field in America's fading oil belt, CO₂ is providing the boost the industry needs.

By pumping the greenhouse gas deep underground, oil companies are squeezing out more oil and providing new life to fields that have been declining for decades. But if the companies can capture the carbon dioxide that other industries produce, then the greenhouse gas may become cheap and plentiful enough to be a boon to Big Oil.

"This process of using CO₂ for enhanced oil recovery is just a niche today, but if other man-made sources became available, it could become a boom," says Mr. Adams, CO₂ engineering manager for Kinder Morgan, the nation's largest transporter of CO₂ for enhanced oil recovery or EOR.

The Houston-based company mines most of its CO₂ from natural deposits in Colorado. It pipes the gas to West Texas oil fields where it is injected a mile beneath the surface. Despite steady growth in EOR production since 2000, it accounts for only about 5 percent of US production – some 240,000 barrels a day.

Now, Kinder Morgan and a few other companies envision greatly expanding that amount – if they can transport CO₂ emissions that would be captured by power plants, cement factories, and other industrial facilities.

Capturing carbon dioxide at plants and factories – rather than spewing it into the atmosphere – is one of the few near-term solutions to global warming that's receiving serious consideration. Under this scenario, companies would bury the greenhouse gases they produce in deep saline aquifers – a process called sequestration.

Some environmentalists say EOR could speed the move to sequestration.

"We see EOR as a great ally for carbon sequestration," says A. Scott Anderson, energy policy adviser for Environmental Defense, a New York-based environmental group.

With the natural CO₂ available for EOR in short sup-

ply, a few companies are scrambling to begin collecting some of the 6 billion tons of carbon dioxide that the US emits each year. If enough of this man-made gas were made available, it could quadruple America's recoverable oil reserves to an estimated 89 billion barrels, the US Energy Department reported last year.

Among the projects under way or under consideration:

- Blue Source, LLC, a company that helps businesses slash their carbon emissions, announced a deal last month to capture CO₂ emissions from a Kansas fertilizer plant and inject it into an aging oil field nearby.
- Representatives of Basin Electric Power Cooperative in North Dakota told a US congressional commission in July that it is planning to capture CO₂ from its Antelope Valley power station and sell it for EOR in the Williston Basin oil field. The field holds nearly 13 billion barrels of oil. But without CO₂ injections, some 9 billion barrels would never be recovered.
- In June, Denbury Resources, a Plano, Texas, company that specializes in using CO₂ to revive aging oil fields on the Gulf Coast, announced that it would buy all the CO₂ emissions of a new coal-to-liquid fuel plant being built in Natchez, Miss.

Supporters of expanding EOR say it could provide a down payment on the huge cost of sequestration by helping to pay for the pipelines and other infrastructure needed to collect and pipe CO₂ around the country.

"If people working on projects for CO₂ capture, can connect with people in the oil field – and in many cases they are close to doing that – the oil industry could end up financing the capture and transport of CO₂," Mr. Anderson says.

Others, however, are skeptical.

For one thing, the infrastructure is a major undertaking. To provide enough carbon dioxide to meet EOR demands, the oil industry would have to capture and pipe as much CO₂ (in liquid form) in a day as Americans consume in oil in a 24-hour period.

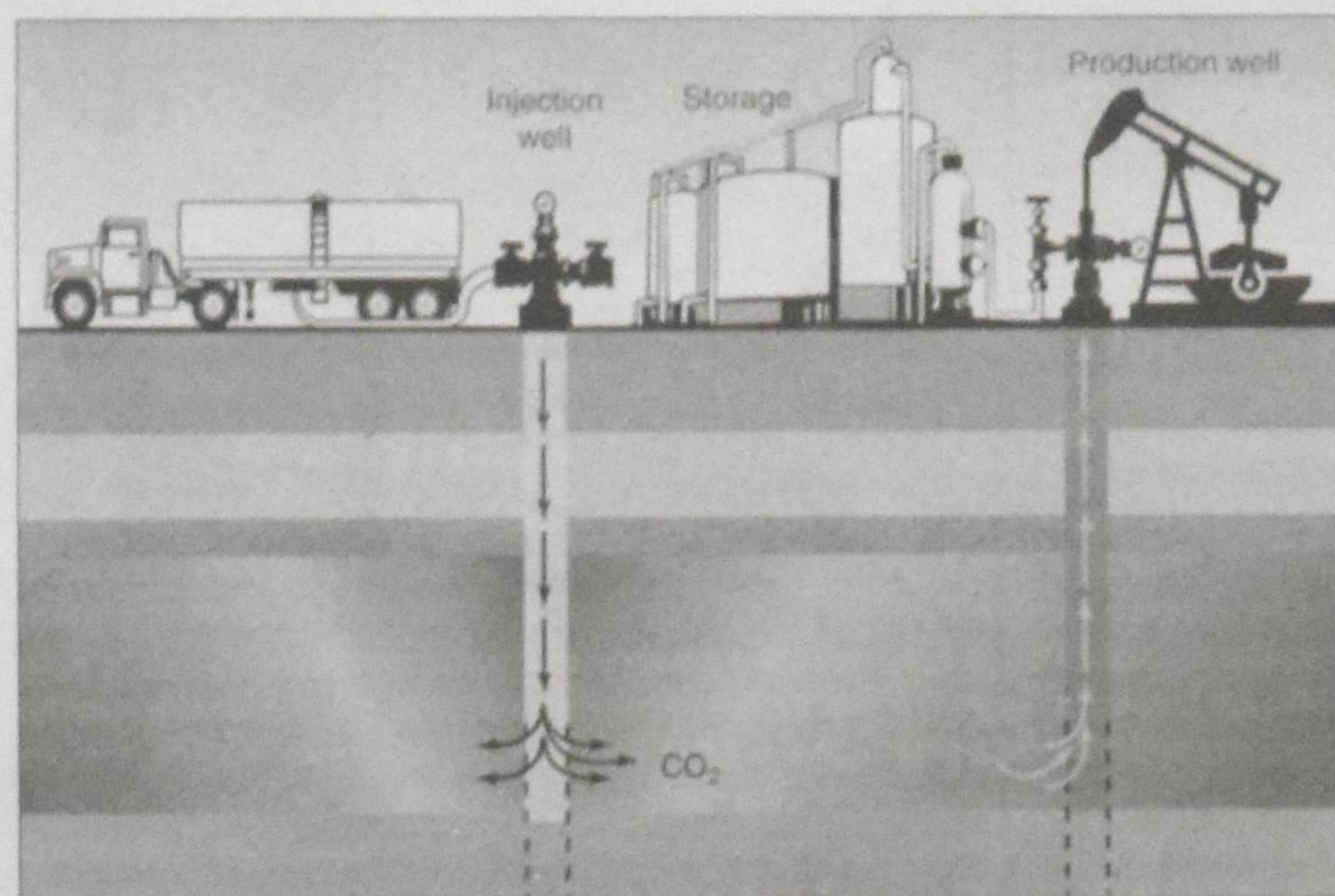
For another, the plan does little to discourage the use of fossil fuels.

"If you use CO₂ to squeeze oil out of the ground, and then you burn that oil, it releases at least as much CO₂ as was pumped into the ground," says Joseph Romm, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress. "You're not really helping the planet any."

Even so, companies are moving ahead. Last year, Denbury announced plans to buy CO₂ from a planned fertilizer plant to be built in Donaldsonville, La. It has been buying up old oil fields south of Houston and plans a CO₂ pipeline that could transport both natural CO₂ in its own reserves and from power plants and other CO₂ sources.

"By pumping the CO₂ underground, we not only help to protect the environment by reducing greenhouse gases, but also produce additional oil to help reduce our nation's need for imported oil," said Gareth Roberts, Denbury's chief executive officer, in a June statement.

Mark Clayton is Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor.



News briefs

Christianity as a unifying force

Addressing the Third European Ecumenical Assembly meeting in Sibiu, Romania in early September, European Commission president José Manuel Barroso praised the role of Christianity in promoting European unification, and he appealed to religions to strengthen the values on which the unity of the continent is based.

"Your churches and confessional communities can contribute, and make a real contribution, to a better understanding between people through promoting mutual respect in a context of shared values," said Barroso.

More and more religions, including Christianity, is being assessed in terms of what contribution it makes to society. Usually that means weighing it in terms of how well it affirms the dominant values of secular society – equality, human rights, democracy, various freedoms and so on. In Europe the politicians seem more and more to be urging upon the Christian community the function of providing social stability and tolerance. And church leaders seem to be eagerly taking up that role.

It has its dangers. Although Christians have long advertised the good that Christianity has contributed to Western culture, it must never allow itself to be defined by them. Often we see Christians criticising Islam for its resistance to women's equality and democracy. We forget that Christians were very critical of democracy and women's equality as pushed by a secularist worldview until relatively recently. And we do well to keep our critical distance.

Vote by brain scan

The neuroscientists are at it again. According to a recent experiment, one day a simple brain scan will be able to determine your political affiliation; just by seeing how your brain reacts when you respond to a battery of questions reveals whether you are leaning to the left or to the right.

The test was a very simple one. The letter M or W would appear on the screen, but one letter would appear much more frequently, so it would be a surprise to see the other appear. The participant had a half second to recognize it and hit the button. The conservatives tended to do poorer in recognizing the change.

I wonder how this experiment would unfold in a country which is not as polarised between liberals and conservatives as the U.S. Certainly the scale that rates people in terms of their openness to change and their resistance to change isn't the overriding one in deciding how to vote, especially if there are more than two parties to choose from.

It's in the blink of an eye and a kiss

Here's another thrilling study that supports some of the claims put forward in the book *Blink*. That book argued that we often make surprisingly complex and accurate judgments in the blink of an eye, by an almost instantaneous intuition.

After surveying well over one thousand college students, the Gallup study concluded that a lot is communicated in that first kiss. Gallup says the first kiss a couple share could make or break the relationship. In a separate survey within the study, 59 percent of men and 66 percent of women reported on occasion finding themselves attracted to someone, only to lose interest after kissing them for the first time.

"The complicated exchange of information that occurs during a kiss may inform evolved, unconscious mechanisms about instances of possible genetic incompatibility," Gallup says.

If that doesn't put added pressure on dating! I can already see a new course on the college curriculum: Kissing 101. No doubt Proctor and Gamble will soon issue lipsticks and mouth sprays that contain pheromones and what not to enhance that all-important first kiss.